'SOCIAL EXCLUSION' AND RESISTANCE: A STUDY OF GYPSIES AND THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR IN BULGARIA 1989-1997.

Katherine Pinnock BA (Hons)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of the University of Wolverhampton
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

October 1999

This work or any part thereof has not previously been presented in any form to the University or any other body whether for the purposes of assessment, publication or for any other purpose. Save for any express acknowledgements, references and/or bibliographies cited in the work, I confirm that the intellectual content of the work is the result of my own efforts and of no other person.

Signature K. Pinnock

Date 28th October 1999

CONTENTS **Page**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

TABLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

Acknowledgements

My largest debt lies with all those NGO workers in Bulgaria whom I interviewed and had contact with, for without them this PhD would not have been possible. I would also like to thank my family, especially my parents Netta and Dave, my brother Owen, and my friends Lucy Dicheva, Vassil Attanassov and all those others who helped me when in Bulgaria. I would particularly like to express my gratitude to Elena Marushiakova and Vassil Popov who on my first and subsequent visits to Bulgaria and even on my return to England advised and supported me in my fieldwork and writing up.

I would also like to thank Hugo Radice who has offered me valuable and thoughtful feedback during the course of my research, Bob Deacon who kindly read and criticised the manuscript at its penultimate stage, and many others who along the way have contributed and helped develop my thoughts. My heartfelt thanks goes out to my final proof readers, Luc Bonenfant, Netta Cartwright and Tom Dickins. I am grateful to the School of Languages and European Studies for providing the funding for this project and to all those within the department who have supported me. Finally, and most importantly I wish to thank my Director of Studies, Mike Haynes for his commitment, his critical abilities, his demanding approach and, above all, his ability to inspire.

Abstract

This thesis uses theories of social exclusion and resistance to investigate the survival strategies of Bulgarian Gypsies and their involvement within the non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector. It addresses the relevance of these theories to our understanding of social inequality in the light of findings that point not only towards new possibilities for resistance within the NGO sector, but also towards the reinforcement of structural inequality. The dialectic of compliance and resistance on the part of Gypsies within NGOs, as identified in the case study, opens up for fresh debate theories 'from below'. This in turn helps unravel some of the benefits and drawbacks of the NGO strategy at the national as well as international level as one for both integration and for political self-assertion.

The implications these findings have for an understanding of the use of social exclusion theory and NGO strategies in policy design are argued to be fundamental. Theories of hidden resistance need to be considered in order to go beyond the restrictive view of 'social exclusion' as a condition characterised by 'isolation', 'backwardness' and/or 'deviancy'. The thesis argues therefore that social exclusion must be problematised and interrogated to a greater extent, both as a concept and as a generic tool for policy making. This is important in order that we do not lose sight of the structural causes of social inequality and perhaps most importantly, the question of responsibility.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Introduction

This thesis uses theories of social exclusion and resistance to investigate responses to changing patterns of social inequality in the East European transition with particular reference to Bulgarian Gypsy communities.[1] As an introduction this chapter sets out the purpose of the thesis and deals largely with methodological issues. The transition in Eastern Europe with its implications of changing social inequality are firstly introduced in order to place into context the subsequent discussion of social exclusion, non-governmental organisation (NGO) strategies of inclusion and ideas of resistance. Practical and theoretical questions about the choice of methodology used in this thesis are then raised with particular reference to interviewing and participant observation. The extent to which such methods are reliable and valid are explored in the final part of the chapter in terms of the specific problems encountered during my fieldwork.

In recent years the dimensions of social inequality have been increasing quantitatively and changing qualitatively both in the 'developed' and the 'developing' countries. The number of households and individuals living in conditions of relative poverty has been on the increase globally since the 1980s.[2] This has been fuelled by a number of factors

---

[1] Throughout this thesis, I refer to this minority of Europe as Gypsies and as one entity unless specified otherwise. I am aware of the negative connotations attached to the use of 'Gypsy', which has caused huge debates among the Gypsy intelligentsia across Europe. In Bulgaria, for example, during a conference in November 1997, the debate centred on whether to use the term 'Cigani' (the externally imposed pejorative label), or 'Roma' (the official self-proclaimed name). Marushiakova and Popov draw attention to the fact that although 'Roma' are the only Gypsy community living in Bulgaria; it is not the generalising self-appellation for all Gypsies. Not all Gypsies in Bulgaria accept the appellation of Roma, and even many of those who use it in an official capacity still use 'Cigani' informally. Rather than getting entangled into such debates, however, and in order to avoid confusion, I persist in the use of the term 'Gypsy' simply to convey their generic name.

[2] In Europe according to official estimates it was estimated that by 1988 there were approximately 18 million households and 52 million individuals living below the poverty line. Although by the 1990s the figure was estimated at 44 million individuals (16 per cent) this was still an increase from 12 per cent of the population in 1975. The poverty threshold is held at 50 per cent of the equivalent mean per capita national expenditure, Eurostat, *Europe in Figures*, 4th edition, 1995. p. 236 and M. Gaudier "Pauvretés, Inégalités, Exclusions: Le Nouveau des Approches Théoriques et des Pratiques Sociales", *Série Bibliographique - Institut International d'Études Sociales*, 17, 1993. p.

including economic problems resulting in a changing economic, social, political and demographic environment, and the ideological shift towards a neo-liberal agenda. Growing poverty and widening social inequality has signalled to governments and policy makers world-wide, a renewed concern with social instability and limits on social welfare.

Rapid regime change in Eastern Europe followed by the implementation of neo-liberal market reform can be seen as an aspect of this global recession. It has given rise to economic collapse, rapid increases in levels of poverty, and a plethora of changing social needs in Eastern Europe, based on unequal access not only to new wealth but also to diminishing resources.[3] In Bulgaria, where the reform process has been far from dynamic and with one of the lowest rates of foreign direct investment since 1989 patterns of increasing poverty and social inequality have been particularly acute. This has opened up questions about the causes of these social inequalities that appear to run much deeper than just being temporary side effects of economic shock therapy. The rapidity with which these inequalities have surfaced has been especially evident in the case of minorities and especially Gypsies.[4] Gypsies in Eastern Europe have been particularly hard-hit by the double blow of economic decline and rising social tension and are perceived by government and society in general as both a threat to and a drain on diminishing resources.

---

47. In the 'majority world' the situation is even more serious. In 1985 the World Bank estimated that the number of poor in developing countries was nearly 2 billion (50 per cent of the population). World Bank, *World Development Report 1990: Poverty*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990. By the late 1990s this situation had deteriorated further, where according to the UNDP, of the 4 billion people in developing countries, nearly 60 per cent lacked basic sanitation and more than 30 per cent did not have access to clean water. UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 1998, quoted in Wolfgang Sachs, "The Discovery of Poverty", *New Internationalist*, 232, June, 1992.

[3] Data published by institutions such as UNICEF, the World Bank and the European Commission form the basis for the majority of discussion on the transition, the implications of which I discuss in chapter 3.

[4] The nature of Gypsy oppression generally and in specific reference to the Communist and post-Communist periods in Eastern Europe is explored in chapter 4.

1.2 Social exclusion theory and the transition

Theories of social exclusion, which have been developed in the West, are increasingly shaping current thinking about events in Eastern Europe. Existing class analysis based on the hierarchical pattern of 'up/down' social divisions has been challenged by dichotomies of 'in/out.' The adoption of social exclusion theory has injected into the poverty debate with renewed resonance notions of deprivation and isolation. These factors are increasingly considered as of equal, if not of more importance to monetary or production based indicators.[5]

Poverty based analyses of social inequality rest on ideas of relative and absolute poverty, which, in turn, rely upon definitions of 'minimum' or 'subsistence' level of living. Relevant indicators are then used to show the level of social disparity within a given society or region. The Luxembourg Income Study database, a co-operative research project with a membership that includes countries from four continents (Europe, America, Asia and Oceania) rests, for example, on a commitment to providing data on income-based inequality.[6] However, social analysts are increasingly inclined to perceive poverty-based analysis as too narrow and out-moded. Robert Walker in his discussion on poverty and social exclusion in Europe, argues that "the traditional concept of poverty smacks [...] of a late Victorian liberal view of society", and "with its focus on the lack of

---

[5] Mayer and Jenkins, for example, claim that their findings based on research carried out in the US revealed that only 24 per cent of material hardship was caused by low income alone and that other factors of age, family size and composition for example come into play. Mayer and Jenkins "Poverty and the Distribution of Material Hardship", *Journal of Human Resources* 24 (1), 1989.

[6] The LIS is partly funded by the Centre for Population Poverty and Policy studies. Its concern with income based inequality is evident in the LIS Working papers, which typically cover topics such as: income distribution; inequality; and poverty. The LIS database also informs research at a more general level, such as B. Buhmann *et al.* "Equivalence Scales, Well-Being, Inequality, and Poverty: Sensitivity Estimates Across Ten Countries Using The Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) Database", *The Review of Income and Wealth*, 34 (2), June, 1988.

disposable income, does not take account of the denial, or non-realisation, of [...] citizenship rights."[7]

This growing distrust of static poverty indicators has encouraged policy makers at the national and international level to develop a new approach to measuring and interpreting social inequality. A Commission for the European Communities (CEC) document entitled *Towards a Europe of Solidarity - Intensifying the Fight Against Social Exclusion, Fostering Integration* sums this up:

> *[debates] on social exclusion point towards an important change over the past 15 years in the nature of the challenge itself: the problem is now not only one of disparity between the top and bottom of the social scale (up/down), but also between those comfortably placed within society and those on the fringe (in/out).* [8]

Ironically, however, this redefinition is itself primarily a top-down process whereby social policy makers and those in positions of power are shaping a new language of social exclusion that draws increasingly on the discourse of human rights and less on concepts of distribution, exploitation and poverty. The indicators of 'well-being', now typical of the social exclusion approach, do still include the measurement of income but in conjunction with such factors as housing, work, health and education. These are correlated in order to make comments on the degree of social or economic participation for certain groups within society. While broadening the way in which social inequality is measured and conceptualised, it has posed a series of intriguing methodological and analytical problems.

---

[7] Robert Walker is Professor of Social Policy Research at Loughborough University. R. Walker "Poverty and Social Exclusion in Europe." In Alan Walker and Carol Walker (eds.), *Britain Divided: The Growth of Social Exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s*. Child Poverty Action Group Ltd, London, 1997. pp. 48-49.

[8] Commission of the European Communities, *Towards a Europe of Solidarity, Intensifying the Fight Against Social Exclusion, Fostering Integration*, COM (92) 542, 1992. p. 7.

Nevertheless, the adoption of social exclusion theory by government agencies and policy makers has proved to be a relatively smooth process in that it refrains from a commitment to any one theory of class, gender or race, instead incorporating aspects from all of them. Readings, in his discussion of the changing foundations of Western knowledge, which he identifies through the changing role of the University, argues that the question of marginalisation is one example of how we have moved,

> *from vertical models of dominance to a more structuralist account in terms of center and periphery. Instead of speaking of power in terms of vertical ascendancy of the rulers over the dominated (the classical model of class domination), we speak of multiple marginalised positions in relation to a hegemonic order. This allows relations of power among transverse groups (groups that included members of all social classes, such as women or homosexuals) to be mapped* [9].

The apparent neutrality that underpins this post-modern approach can soon give way to political and ideological manipulation. By locating the causes of inequality in vague abstract forces and perhaps more significantly in the nature of the groups or individuals themselves, national and international policy makers are able to subtly remove responsibility away from themselves, from multilateral institutions and subsequently from national governments.

The rapidity with which the concept of social exclusion has entered official and popular discourse has encouraged governments to search for accessible and immediate 'solutions'. The existing non-governmental and, in particular, voluntary sector in the West and its application to the 'developing' world has proved to be a suitable model for those practitioners in Eastern Europe embarking on policies of 'participation', 'self-help' and 'community development'. Each of these strategies are laden with conceptual baggage and have roots that lie outside NGO theory. However, in the move towards finding immediate and popular remedies to problems of 'social exclusion', the NGO sector and

[9] Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts and London, 1996.

its emphasis on 'bottom-up' participation and grass roots activities has often become the 'answer' to a whole array of problems ranging from social, economic, political to cultural. Western donor agencies and policy makers in Eastern Europe have largely supported the NGO sector in the belief that participation 'from below' can help nurture an active civil society and consolidate a genuine democracy.

This thesis reviews the concept of social exclusion and asks whether it contains internal contradictions and carries ideological overtones by exploring the extent to which it has positive or negative implications for the groups it claims to benefit. It does this by asking:

1. First, how successfully does social exclusion theory help us to understand the core processes or situations it identifies, , i.e. has it been correct in its prognosis that groups will perpetuate their own poverty and isolation if not given access to mainstream societal institutions? An analysis of the function of NGOs for Gypsies in the Bulgarian context is central to this. Their use of this sector for specific ends and the nature of the relationship that is subsequently forged between the international donors and the Gypsy related foundations at the ground level indicates how the NGO sector for Gypsies is at once restrictive and enabling.

2. Second, there is the problem of what this theory might fail to explain; in particular, does it account for the contradictions that are emerging in terms of both resistance and participation on the part of those groups defined as excluded? That the NGO sector during the transition has developed into a site of both conflict and incorporation for many Gypsies highlights the validity of this question and further raises the possibility that 'incorporation from below' has formed an important post-1989 Gypsy survival strategy both within this sector and the wider context.

The thesis addresses these two questions by connecting the following four analyses:

1. A critical discussion of the concept of social exclusion and how its emergence and use in transition societies in popular discourse may have marginalised concepts of class and power.
2. A critical analysis of the role of NGOs and their rise in importance in post-communist transition.
3. An evaluation of resistance theories 'from below' and how they could relate to Gypsy responses during the transition.
4. A report of those NGOs working with Gypsies in Bulgaria based upon fieldwork in that country.[10]

1.3 Gypsies and the NGO sector

Gypsies of Eastern Europe cover a wide variety of different ethnic groups that can be divided along various different lines, ranging from lifestyle and occupation to religion. Much research has been carried out over time by either anthropologists or linguists who have explored the rich complexities of different Gypsy groups. Stewart has recently published an account of his ethnographic fieldwork carried out in Hungary in the 1980s with one group of Gypsies, the Rom, which serves to undermine the often over-simplistic view of Gypsies.[11] In Bulgaria alone there are numerous Romany dialects, which Kenrick

---

[10] In the context of the debates surrounding the question of what should be included and conversely what should be excluded from the definition of a non governmental organisation, NGOs are taken in this thesis to mean all those non-profit organisations that have established themselves as separate from the governmental structure and which rest on some form of private funding, whether it be through domestic or foreign sources. Within this broad framework the focus of my study is on those NGOs who have at least as one of their main concerns issues specifically to do with Gypsies. For the purpose of this thesis, these did not include those organisations which defined themselves as businesses or those which were rooted in the Pentecostal Church. Although both did directly deal with Gypsy issues and for many were a vital source of empowerment, they posed questions that extended beyond the scope of this study.

[11] Stewart explains how the Rom form part of the Vlach Gypsies who constitute 20 per cent of the Gypsy population in Hungary and are generally seen as the worst kind by 'ordinary' Hungarians and officials. The Vlach Romany-speaking Gypsies had come over from Transylvania and the Romanian principalities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and gradually dispersed and settled around the major industrial towns. Stewart highlights the contradictions in Rom culture. Although lacking a consciously held ethnic identity, their language holds together their community and helps establish a shared identity. Shared social activity and the ideology of nurture for the Rom in

uses to distinguish between different types of Gypsies.[12] His work complements that of Marushiakova and Popov, who in their comprehensive analysis based on decades of fieldwork, describe all the variety of groups of Gypsies in great detail.[13]

Although the study of Gypsies has grown in popularity in recent years, especially in the context of Eastern Europe, knowledge about their daily existence still remains shrouded in obscurity. In spite of (or because of) this, Gypsies are proving to be ever popular among Western donors and NGOs in Eastern Europe, so much so that for many of the NGOs in Eastern Europe, which rely on external funding it has become almost a necessity to include Gypsies (however superficially) into their programmes.[14] While the growing NGO sector has signalled to the government a potential threat, for many activists the NGO sector has become the embodiment of, or perhaps a vehicle for, the Gypsy cause. By developing a critique of social exclusion theory building on existing theories of 'hidden resistance', and in applying this to the situation of Gypsies within the Bulgarian NGO sector the thesis hopes to substantiate the following four hypotheses:

1. The continued survival of Gypsies as a distinct ethnic group, coupled with the active self-organisation of educated Gypsies within the NGO sector, reveals that, contrary to popular misconception, Gypsies are not by definition isolated, passive or de-politicised.

Hungary overrides conventional ideas of descent and inheritance of character. This emphasis on the present rather than on the past makes it possible for someone of non-Rom origin to become a Roma if they learn the language and partake in the shared values. Michael Stewart, *The Time of the Gypsies*, Westview Press, Oxford, 1997. p. 9-11

[12] Donald Kenrick, *Morphology and Lexicon of the Romany Dialect of Kotel, Bulgaria.* Unpublished PhD thesis. University of London, 1969.

[13] Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Gypsies (Roma) in Bulgaria*, Studien zur Tsganelogi und Folklovistik 18, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 1997. They depict Gypsy groups that are separated along several different lines: religion; occupation; lifestyle; external labelling; self identification and so forth.

[14] Marushiakova and Popov, *The Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria - Policy and Community Development*, Sofia, forthcoming.

2. The strategy of inclusion for Gypsies in Eastern Europe through the NGO sector is a vastly complex procedure which, at the formal level, holds within it both the potential for effective bottom-up integration as well as continued top-down assimilation.

3. Gypsies involved within the NGO sector have been able to 'manipulate' NGO rhetoric and develop strategies for survival that rest on aspects of both compliance and resistance.

4. Given that Gypsies are not by definition isolated, and that they play an ambiguous role within the NGO sector, theories of social exclusion do not adequately account for the experiences of Gypsies in Bulgaria.

Evaluating both formal and informal responses to the transition underpins the discussion on Gypsies and the NGO sector in Bulgaria. While critically analysing both liberal and resistance interpretations of Gypsy responses, I question the formal distinction that exists between 'everyday resistance' and the strategies of the NGO sector.[15] The possibility of there being a hidden transcript within the NGO sector is explored whereby Western concepts of human rights and civil society, coupled with NGO strategies of 'bottom-up participation' are seemingly 'played with' by those active within it. 'Everyday resistance' is therefore not necessarily some external seething underworld of anti-social behaviour but is intertwined into the very survival strategies of Gypsies, including their participation in the formal realm of the third sector. [16] The exploration of informal resistance, whatever form this may take, is set within a more general critique of the extent to which the NGO sector does indeed offer the solution to 'social exclusion'.

---

[15] James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1985; *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1976; *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, Yale University Press, New Haven, London, 1990. Ideas of resistance within the NGO sector using Scott as a reference are discussed in Katherine Pinnock, "The NGO sector and Gypsy Resistance in Bulgaria", *REERC Discussion Paper*, 2, University of Wolverhampton, 1998.

[16] The NGO sector is often referred to as the 'Third Sector', whereby the first is the public or state sector and the second the private sector.

The thesis therefore contributes not only to Romani studies but to the wider debate aimed at elucidating an understanding of social inequality and questions of social agency. What this thesis does not claim to do is to offer an ethnographic account of Gypsies and their various organisations in Bulgaria, although this does at times form part of the analysis. *Chapter 2* explores the conceptual and practical evolution of social exclusion, taking into consideration the question of resistance and the role of NGOs. *Chapter 3* explores the implications of using social exclusion theory for understanding changing patterns of social inequality during the 'transition', with special reference to Bulgaria. It examines the empirical problems that inevitably plague such a study, where statistical data on social inequality remains problematic and often unreliable. *Chapter 4* focuses on the development of official policy regarding Gypsies in Eastern Europe, with a special focus on Bulgaria, as an example of a group traditionally defined as 'marginalised' or as suffering from 'social exclusion'. This gives us an indication of the way in which, as a minority group, Gypsies have been subject to systematic and institutionalised oppression and of the ambiguous repercussions that arise when they are included into existing protective legal frameworks. *Chapter 5* offers a review of both international and national NGOs with special reference to Bulgaria and illustrates the complexities of the debates that surround the use of NGOs as an alternative to the state and as a means for integration both at the national and international levels.

As an extension of this discussion on NGOs and closely based on the fieldwork discussed below, *chapters 6, 7 and 8* present the core findings of this thesis. *Chapter 6* sets out the formal and informal ways in which Gypsies have been responding to their treatment as a socially excluded group during the transition in Bulgaria, comparing everyday survival strategies with the more acceptable response of working within the NGO sector. *Chapter 7* explores the implications of the different ways in which these responses are and can be interpreted, with special reference to liberal and resistance

readings and the idea of public and hidden transcripts. In *chapter 8* a Gypsy-led foundation in Bulgaria is taken as a case study in order to explore in closer detail the interaction of these formal and informal transcripts. In particular, it explores the way in which many of those within the sector appear to simultaneously comply with and resist against the NGO rationale and wider concepts of integration. The implications these findings have for an understanding of the use of social exclusion theory in policy design are argued to be fundamental; namely the groups normally considered as isolated, backward and defined as socially excluded are very much intertwined with society's structures.

The thesis concludes therefore in *chapter 9* that, given the problems and possibilities of resistance and compliance within the NGO sector, social exclusion and the NGO strategy of inclusion must be problematised and interrogated to a greater extent, both as concepts and as generic tools for policy making in order that we do not lose sight of the causes of social inequality and, most importantly, the question of responsibility. In particular, the resemblance of social exclusion theory to those of marginality, the underclass and culture of poverty poses a real possibility that assumptions of backwardness, deviancy and welfare dependency still inform mainstream policy debates today regarding groups defined as 'socially excluded'.

1.4 Methodology

This section evaluates existing research methods and thereby sets into context the approach chosen for this study. This takes the form of a discussion on general issues to do with statistics including the use of a case study and the strategy of triangulation. More specifically it addresses the problems and benefits of firstly the interview method and secondly the participant observation method, both in theory and in practice.

Gypsies in Eastern Europe, and in particular, Bulgaria are taken as the 'excluded' group in this study for a number of reasons. Firstly, they represent a topical example of a group generally perceived by the public and Western commentators as an excluded and stigmatised group, who, above all, partly exclude themselves. Secondly, Gypsies collectively represent the largest and the most stigmatised ethnic group in Europe, mostly concentrated in the countries that lie in Eastern Europe. Thirdly, as a relatively understudied country within Eastern Europe, and given the fact that it has the largest proportion of Gypsies living within its borders, Bulgaria presented itself as an important and valid country for such a focused study. This choice was enhanced further by opportunities for extensive access brought about by links forged between my host university and the University of Rousse, Bulgaria.

In contrast to the traditional anthropological approach, I take a top-down approach towards Gypsies in Bulgaria. In a similar vein to Nader, who in 'reinventing anthropology' posed the question, "What if [..] anthropologists were to study the colonizers, rather than the colonized, the culture of power rather than the culture of the powerless, the culture of affluence rather than the culture of poverty?", I focus on the affluent field of 'positive' activity, , i.e. the NGO sector, in order to address the question of both social exclusion and social inclusion.[17] The participation of Gypsies within the NGO sector represents for many human right activists a pro-active response on the part of the Gypsies themselves. In particular, it is heralded as a key weapon in the fight to break the vicious 'cycle of deprivation.'[18] However, my research into Gypsies and NGOs in Bulgaria revealed a number of interesting problems, not only about the role of the

---

[17] L. Nader "Up the Anthropologist - Perspectives Gained from Studying Up." In D. Hymes (ed.) *Reinventing Anthropology*, Random House, New York, 1969. p. 298.

[18] The 'cycle of deprivation' was a concept that first gained currency in Britain and the USA during the 1980s and was a term used by a number of scholars to describe and account for the apparent transmitting of dependency from one generation to the next. See for example Charles Murray, *Losing Ground*, Basic Books, New York, 1984; Susanne MacGregor, *The Politics of Poverty*, Longman, London, 1981 and Michael Rutter and Nicola Madge, *Cycles of Disadvantage*, Heinemann, London, 1976.

sector itself as an effective tool for the integration of Gypsies, but also its role within wider strategies of inclusion.

My research involved a number of stages and took on a number of forms, namely, the use of case study, formal and informal interviewing, and participant observation. As well as the importance of face-to-face contact, this approach also proved vital for the collection of normally inaccessible documentation (such as NGO pamphlets, reports, project proposals, self-evaluation records, and other published materials, for example regional statistics). More specifically, I was able to triangulate my research strategy.[19] By making use of interviews, participant observation, available literature and discussions with other interested parties I was able to cross-check any data gathered in the interview and so explore multiple aspects of a single empirical entity.[20] As raised by Miller, this strategy of triangulation assumes that there is an objective reality, a reality that is better revealed when subject to closer scrutiny.[21] At a more general level, my interview data and observations form the qualitative part of a wider empirical analysis of the NGO sector and Gypsies during the transition.

In terms of the sequence these methods took, I first carried out a broad survey of social inequality across Eastern Europe. As preparation for my fieldwork, I also undertook lessons in Russian and Bulgarian language and began to familiarise myself with 'post-Communist' societies, which involved a working trip to Russia. Trips to Bulgaria were then planned. Before coming to Bulgaria I was able to acquire lists of NGOs working

---

[19] Triangulation refers to the process of multiple mapping, whereby a particular observation or finding is subject to scrutiny from more than one source. It was first formalised as a research strategy by N. K. Denzin, *Sociological Methods: A Sourcebook*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1978.

[20] In the course of this thesis I take care to distinguish between the information that I was able to cross-check and that which I was not.

[21] Gale Miller "Building Bridges The Possibility of Analytic Dialogue Between Ethnography, Conversation Analysis and Foucault." In David Silverman (ed.), *Qualitative Research Theory, Method and Practice*, Sage Publications, London, 1998. p. 25.

with Gypsies from various sources such as the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti issues (CPRSI) at the OSCE, the Gypsy Research Centre in Paris, and existing contacts in Bulgaria. These, together with contacts I collected during the course of my fieldwork, provided me with a good cross section sample of 'successful' Gypsy-related NGOs in Bulgaria.

The second stage consisted of two short trips to Bulgaria, the first for a period of 3 weeks and the second for 1 week. During these early stages I made various contacts with Gypsies and non-Gypsies working within the NGO sector, including Marushiakova and Popov from whom I obtained valuable advice.[22] This was an essential stage in my research for it allowed me to seek out key NGOs and to assess what kind of approach was appropriate in terms of the type of questions, their sequencing and how tight or loose they would be.[23]

My subsequent fieldwork over a period of 3 months represented the final stage in my research. Building on existing contacts and knowledge I carried out formal interviews, conversation as interviews and periods of participant observation in the following locations: Sofia, Plovdiv, Sliven and Rousse (see Figure 1.1). I undertook my research in a number of different settings, such as NGO seminars, an international conference, and meetings with various professionals whose work involved contact with Gypsies.[24] The bulk of my time, however, was spent with interviewing members of Gypsy and Gadjo-led foundations who were operating within the NGO sector.[25]

---

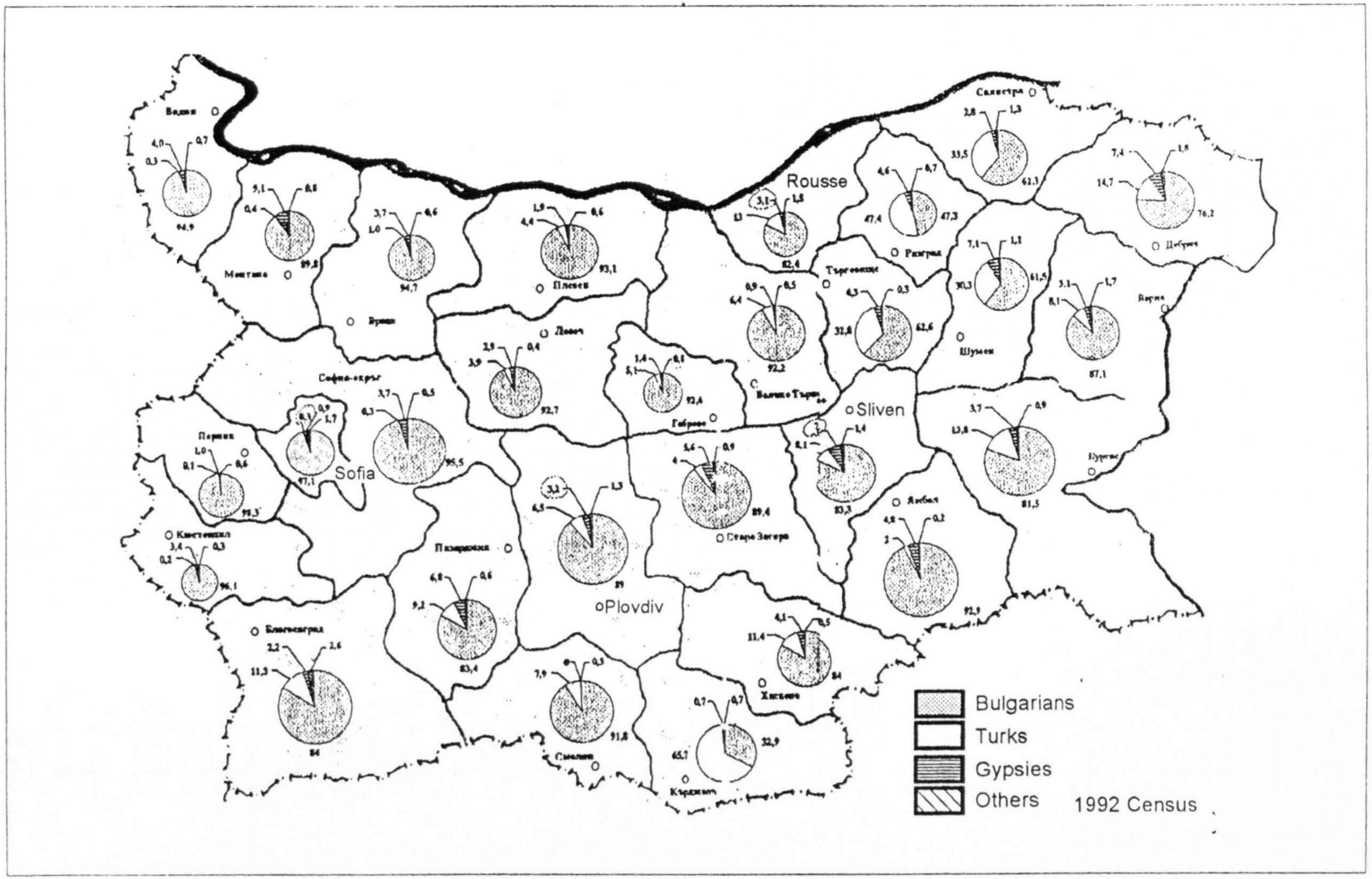
[22] They have researched and written extensively on Gypsies in Bulgaria (see bibliography).

[23] Briggs, in his discussion of the interview as a methodology, stresses the importance for an introductory period of 'passive research', which allows the researcher to explore and prepare for more in-depth fieldwork. C. L. Briggs, *Learning How to Ask*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986.

[24] Such as a director of a 'special school', a prison officer, a police officer, and a representative of the social services.

[25] See Appendix 2 for full listing of interviews. 'Gadjo' is a generic term used by Gypsies to refer to all those who are non-Gypsies. The term 'Gadjo' takes on a variety of forms, such as 'Gajo', 'Gaje' or 'Gorgio' depending on regional context and dialect. Its specific meaning also changes from one context to another. For example, it can mean 'outsider,' or 'foreigner' or in some cases can have a more derogatory overtone.

Figure 1.1 The Ethnic Composition of Bulgaria



1.5 Methodology and statistics

Any discussion on methodology needs to include an awareness of the wider debates that permeate our understanding and use of statistics. Quantitative methods, based on large scale standardised surveys and questionnaires, tend to be held up as 'scientific' and therefore regarded as reliable and valid. However, official statistics based on quantitative methods are not immune from accusations of unreliability. First, the way in which data is gathered is seen as not always entirely representative. Second, quantitative data collection relies on artificial settings (on what people say, rather than what people do) and therefore it reduces meaning to only that which is observable.[26] Third, quantitative methods are particularly prone to political manipulation given their 'scientific' basis.

In contrast, qualitative data is held up by many as a more reliable alternative to quantitative methods. It is perceived as providing the necessary contextual information that often remains undetected in quantitative research. Second, it provides more insight into human behaviour. Third, it allows for an insider's view on the individuals, groups or societies in question, and finally, it enables more of an input into the hypothesis, thus being less abstract.[27] However, qualitative methods are equally open to attack. The most common complaint made about qualitative methods is that they are too specific. The fact that they are carried out in a particular place, at a particular time, and under particular circumstances can render the study atypical and thus make generalisations only tentative.

While the schism between quantitative and qualitative data is a familiar one, in the context of Eastern Europe the question of reliability and validity goes much deeper. Statisticians in Eastern Europe trying to track the 'transition' are confronted with a

---

[26] Paul Atkinson and Martyn Hammersly, "Ethnography and Participant Observation." In Norman K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications, London, 1994.

[27] Egon G. Guba and Yvonne S. Lincoln, "Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research." In Denzin and Lincoln (eds.), *ibid.* p. 106.

number of obstacles. While facing the obviously difficult task of measuring a society in flux, they are also having to undergo a conceptual shift in line with the West in terms of their methods of gathering and collating statistics. Their task of providing valid and reliable statistics is made all the more difficult by a sharp decline in money and resources available to them. Their position is undermined further by a general suspicion of official statistics on the part of the population as a whole in both Eastern and Western Europe.

In terms of Gypsies, the problem of accurate measurement is even more problematic. The inconsistencies in claims over the numbers of Gypsies illustrates this well. According to the Gypsy Research Centre in Paris, Gypsies in Bulgaria number between 700,000 and 800,000 people. This contrasts with the more modest estimation of about 500,000, which is generally taken as a more realistic figure and was agreed upon at the seminar "Aspects of the Ethnocultural Situation in Bulgaria" (November 8-10 1991, Sofia).[28] The results of the 1992 census, however, appeared for many to put both these claims to rest with its low figure of 313,326 (3.69 per cent of the total populations as compared with 9.43 per cent for the Turks). However, for others this represented more a flaw in census data collection, especially regarding Gypsies, rather than a reflection of faults in other estimates. The inconsistencies that plague attempts at measuring the population size of Gypsies lie with a number of problems, the most important being that of the self-identification of Gypsies. In a hostile environment many are reluctant to reveal themselves officially as Gypsies instead declaring themselves as either Turkish or Bulgarian. In this way, they remain under-represented in census reports, yet at the same time run the risk of being over-emphasised in non-official estimates.[29]

---

[28] D. Vasileva, "Conference Report", *International Migration Review*, 26 (4), 1992. pp. 1457-1561.

[29] See for example, Colin Clark, "Counting Backwards: The Roma 'Numbers Game' in Central and Eastern Europe", *Radical Statistics*, 69, Autumn, 1998.

In light of the current situation in Eastern Europe where there has been a transformation in both the political system and in the system of measurement, the drawbacks of unreliable quantitative data suitable for cross-country comparison is of particular significance. Institutions such as the World Bank and the United Nations (UN), continue to produce comparative studies on the economic situation across Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union despite the obvious difficulties with inconsistent statistical methods. Rather than drawing attention to the most deprived aspects of the transition, these large scale reports therefore serve only to skim the surface.[30] Other institutions, such as UNICEF, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Luxembourg Income Study Project, however, appear to be more rigorous and critical in their mapping of the transition.

It would therefore be self-defeating to discard existing quantitative data altogether. Indeed, many ethnographers and researchers in general reject the positivist stance that quantitative statistics are the *only* legitimate methods, rather than the principle of quantitative methodology *per se*.[31] In a similar vein, this thesis, in recognising the distinct lack of reliable empirical data, the complexity of Gypsy problems and their responses coupled with the unstable nature of the NGO sector, carefully draws on available data, but attempts to reach a middle ground by combining it with a thorough qualitative study carried out at the ground level.

Nevertheless these complexities coupled with the closeness of the Gypsy communities, presented a series of methodological problems. Yet, these problems themselves also served to shed light on a series of interesting questions such as: authenticity (gaining

[30] For example, in the United Nations Development Project (UNDP) National Human Development Report for Bulgaria, less than a third of the report is dedicated to issues surrounding 'The Society in Transition'. Within this only 4 pages contain discussion on the NGO sector, and less still, only one paragraph is left for 'the Roma'. UNDP, *The State of Transition and Transition of the State*, UNDP, Sofia, 1998.

[31] Atkinson and Hammersly, *op. cit.* p. 251.

access to the 'real' or 'hidden' transcript); cultural practices (, i.e. the use of the interview); and the reliability and validity of statistics, whether they be qualitative or quantitative. These theoretical and practical complexities reinforced the need to 'study up' as well as to 'study down'.[32] In other words, I needed to examine the interaction of both the formal and informal worlds of the NGO sector, and relate my own qualitative findings to existing quantitative data. Ultimately, therefore, this study attempts to fill in gaps left by inadequate official and non-official data, especially in terms of Gypsies and their involvement with the NGO sector.

1.6 The interview method in theory

As with the general debates on methodology, views on interviewing tend to stretch to two extremes. The objectivist (or positivist) school of thought takes the position that the ultimate goal of interviewing is to grasp the truth. The objectivist ideal, therefore, is the 'pure' interview, which would provide a 'mirror reflection' of reality. The other extreme view is the 'relativist' view most recently taken up by the social constructionists (or post-modernists), who argue that there is no objective truth 'out there', rendering the interview meaningless. To the social constructionist, the interview is nothing more than, "an interaction between the interviewer and interview subject in which both participants create and construct narrative versions of the social world." [33] Silverstein (1981), for example, argues that an over reliance on interviews frustrates theoretical progress. He goes on to argue that as a research tool, the interview suppresses precisely the type of data needed, and serves only to mislead the researcher into thinking that responses can be analysed simply in terms of a referential examination of surface forms.[34]

---

[32] Helen B. Schwartsman, *Ethnography in Organisations*, Qualitative Research Methods Series 27, Sage University Paper, Sage Publications, London, 1993. p. 45.

[33] Jody Miller and Barry Glassner, "The 'Inside' and the 'Outside': Finding Realities in Interviews." In Silverman, *op. cit.* p. 99.

[34] Cited in Briggs, *op. cit.* p. 118.

Briggs attempts to bridge these two extremes by viewing the interview as a political and 'native metacommunicative event', yet without making it redundant.[35] He makes the subtle distinction between the interview as a neutral research tool and the interview as a specific cultural and ideological practice. "Basically, interviews are concerned with finding answers to 'our' questions, not 'theirs'." [36] By building on the anthropological discourse of the 1960s and 1970s, that demanded greater reflexivity within the research situation, Briggs calls for a process of reflection in the task of interpreting the data.[37] Indeed, it has become increasingly plausible for many researchers that findings are 'created' through the interaction of inquirer and phenomenon rather than discovered through objective observation, "as they really are, and as they really work." [38] Taking this as his starting point he embarks on a fruitful discussion revealing the full potential that can be gleaned from an interview, if, and only if, one fully considers its cultural implications.

Briggs problematises the interview as a cultural practice for a variety of reasons. Firstly, when interviewing people from different cultural backgrounds, the interviewer often makes errors when s/he fails to be in tune with how the cultural group in question communicate among themselves. Secondly, the interviewer must recognise that the interview restricts normal social interaction, and as a result s/he must ask who is allowed or prevented from participating in the interview process.[39] Thirdly, messages other than the spoken word need to be understood and interpreted, such as gestures, intonation and expression, coupled with 'non-ordinary' speech, such as jokes and proverbs. Finally, and

---

[35] *Ibid.* p. 47.
[36] *Ibid.* p. 124.
[37] *Ibid.* p. 119.
[38] Guba and Lincoln, *op. cit.* p. 107.
[39] For example due to factors, such as availability, linguistic competence, status within the workplace, and so forth.

tied in with all of these points, is the significance of the way in which the interviewer poses or frames the question.

The importance of Brigg's discussion of the interview, as a cultural as well as research process, must not be underestimated. In re-evaluating its cultural assumptions, yet still valuing its role as a research tool, he encourages the interviewer to be more aware of his or her own role within the research process. This self-conscious referential element to the process of interviewing, and indeed other qualitative methods, is a theme that runs throughout this study.

1.7 Interviewing in practice

The distinction between standardised interviewing and open-ended (or conversation based) interviews is an illustration of how the wider debates penetrate practice at the ground level. These two types of interviewing are set up in opposition to each other. Standardised interviews tend to lean towards the quantitative ideal of reflecting an objective reality in that, by definition, they cover a larger number of interviewees and therefore increase reliability and thus validity. In contrast, the flexible approach of open-ended interviews rely more on a small scale project, associated with the qualitative approach. The emphasis here is on depth rather than breadth, making the possibility of generalisation more problematic, yet at the same time, making it more likely that pre-judgements will be avoided.

The type of interviews I carried out recognised the problems with and importance of both these types of interview methods. In total I interviewed members of 25 NGOs (some more in-depth than others). I used a loose but structured interview approach, which had two purposes. The first was to gain first hand information about the nature of the NGO sector and the involvement of different groups in it. A set of questions, which I asked

every interviewee working within the NGO sector (, i.e. factual details about the NGO and its projects) formed the standardised part of the interview. My second purpose, was to gain insights into how this information was expressed and how the issues they raised were defined. Following on from the 'factual' basis there was a freer discussion on issues and ideas. As a result, I have been able to put together a typology of NGOs working with Gypsies, as well as having some insight into their motives, hopes and fears.

My preliminary interviews with Gypsy and Gadjo NGO leaders in Bulgaria were carried out in March 1997. This coincided with the intervening period between the student led protests that had just recently taken place across Bulgaria and the oncoming elections in April of that year that had been conceded by the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP). Using a model adapted from Schwartzman and based on my preliminary interviews I was able to identify more clearly the potentially most useful areas of research that could be focused on for my third extended visit.

Figure 1.2 draws attention to a number of interesting focus areas. For example, the high level of interaction within the workplace indicated to me the need to secure some kind of 'work placement' to allow for participant observation as well as for interviews. Also, there appeared to be regular contact between NGO workers and the local Gypsies rather than through the NGO leaders, which highlighted the need to form close links with the workers as well as with the more obvious leader figures.

Figure 1.2 The Communication Contexts Grid: Relations between different actors working with Gypsies within the NGO sector in Bulgaria. [40]

	Local Gypsies	**NGO Project Workers**	**NGO leaders**	**Partner NGOs**	**Donor agencies**
Local Gypsies	1.Tight knit, kinship / community level 2. Home, work, street level 3. All the time	1.Interaction via projects,and voluntary participation of locals 2. Office, street 3. Often	1. When locals come into office 2. In the office 3. Not as often	Not applicable	1.Through arranged visits and 'tours'. 2. Street or seminars 3. Seldom
NGO Project Workers	-	1.Close knit interaction at work 2 . Office, social events 3. Everyday	1. Close but tense 2. Office, social events 3. Everyday	1.Formal and informal 2. Seminars, workshops 3. Often	1.Scepticism and dependency 2. Seminars and workshops 3. Not very often
NGO leaders	-	-	1. Mixture of rivalryand companionship2. Conferences and seminars3. Regularly	1.Collaboration and support, hierarchical2. Each others'offices, tel./fax3. Regularly	1.Close ties, dependency 2. Formal meetings, tel./fax 3. Not very often

KEY: 1. How 2. Where/in what situation 3. Frequency

The visible links that existed between partner NGOs was also an important factor to consider, in that contact with one NGO leader could on the one hand open up a vast network of other NGOs, yet on the other hand close off a whole section of 'rival' NGOs. Finally, the distance that clearly existed between the donors and the NGOs and in turn the Gypsy communities implied that this was an area of particular interest. If only at a practical level, this observation served to emphasise the need to seek a variety of ways of gaining information about the role of the donor other than just through the respective NGO.

[40] Based on a model by Schwartzman, who devised it to identify useful areas of research in human service programs. H.B. Schwartzman "The Ethnographic Evaluation of Human Service Programs", *Anthropological Quarterly*, 56, 1983. p. 183 Fig. 1.

Since my first visit in March, the April 1997 elections had secured a change in Government and a period of brief optimism had ensued. However, by the autumn, with the prospect of a harsh winter and an escalating economic crisis, only partially bridled by the fixing of the Bulgarian Leva to the German Mark, disillusionment was gradually seeping in. This bleak setting did not hamper the rapidly growing NGO sector, however, and gaining access to it in terms of arranging interviews with leaders and workers was not as difficult as I had anticipated. Firstly, the NGO sector was already established and quite visible. Secondly, the NGOs were generally willing to talk with me. Reasons for this include the fact that I was from the West which meant I represented a potentially useful contact, for example, in seeking out future sources of funding. [41] Thirdly, I was a young woman and so did not represent an obvious threat or rival. Finally and tied in with the latter point, was their need as NGOs to promote a (positive) public profile to interested parties , i.e. displaying a willingness to co-operate and communicate. [42]

The interview would take place according to the arrangements made by the interviewee: I would let them decide a time and place most convenient for them.[43] This most commonly involved going to their place of work; if not, we would meet in public places, such as cafes. I would begin by introducing myself and explaining my purpose. I would then pose a series of descriptive questions about the NGO, for example, when it was set up, its main aims, current projects, personnel involved and other NGOs they were linked with. From this a more general discussion would evolve, based on more structural questions, that would allow me to adapt my questions accordingly, probing deeper on some points

---

[41] This was not withstanding that from the outset I was always very clear with them that my purpose was to carry out research for my PhD and that I was entirely independent of any funding bodies in the UK or elsewhere.

[42] For one of my interviews with a Gypsy NGO in Sliven, they had invited a local journalist to sit in on the interview. By publicising themselves through the media, it was clear that they had also wanted to benefit from this encounter .

[43] Although the sophistication of the content and process of interviewing required the use of an interpreter (except in those cases where the interviewee could speak English) I did possess a basic knowledge of Bulgarian which helped me in more informal interactions.

or leading on to other questions with others.[44] The interview would last on average about an hour and I would wind up by asking them about their hopes and fears for the future, for Gypsies in general and then specifically for their NGO.

Briggs, in his discussion on the interview as a two way process highlights that the researcher must take into account the changing interactional goals of both the interviewer and interviewee during the course of the interview.[45] Indeed, my motivation for the interview did not necessarily correspond with that of the interviewee, thus reducing the potential for 'explicit transmission of data'. My intention was to find out how the NGO worked and what their perception was of its value and role within the NGO sector and, further still, its impact on Gypsies in general. In contrast, the motivation of the NGO leader was not necessarily concerned with transmitting this information. In some cases their intention was to present themselves, above all, in a positive light, i.e. to impress me and nurture some kind of profitable link. In other cases, the motivation for the interviewee was to have the opportunity to discharge their frustration about the everyday struggles and obstacles they face as an individual and as part of the NGO.

The extent to which personal biography and experience influences the research role and progress is another point to consider, as briefly discussed earlier.[46] I was a young white woman, from 'the West' and, perhaps most significantly, not a Gypsy. All of these factors taken together presented someone who was at once vulnerable, given my youth, yet privileged given my background. These factors had ambiguous repercussions. My age in

---

[44] Spradley outlines three types of ethnographic questions: descriptive, structural and contrast. He breaks each of these down further. The different kinds of structural questions were of particular relevance, which included, the verification question, used to confirm or disconfirm a hypothesis; the over term question, which would be a specific question about an issue already raised; and the included term question, which uses an expression of the interviewee to ask a question. James P.. Spradley, *The Ethnographic Interview*, Holt, Reinhart and Winston, New York, 1979. p. 60.

[45] Briggs, *op. cit.*

[46] Robert G. Burgess, *In the Field -An Introduction to Field Research*, Contemporary Social Research 8, London, New York, 4th edition, 1990. p. 88.

most cases worked in my favour, where people I came into contact with were inclined to 'take me under their wing'. Yet, on a few occasions, my age and, thus apparent lack of experience, nurtured a degree of scepticism. Coming from the West was also a factor that influenced how I was perceived. With most of my interviews, I was confronted with requests for 'help', mainly in the form of helping them forge links with Western donors. Ultimately, however, it was my identity as a Gadjo that caused me the greatest concern. However, contrary to popular belief, antagonism towards Gadjos on the part of Gypsies did not, in most cases, materialise. This is perhaps largely due to the fact that most of the Gypsies I came into contact with had plentiful experience of relations with 'Westerners' and were in ready contact with Gadjos on a daily basis.

In the light of this, the need to consider the interaction of the two different motives, , i.e. that of the interviewer and of the interviewee, was essential. Furthermore, it was necessary to consider the context in which this interaction was taking place, in terms of how external factors influenced my interpretation of events and, in turn, how it affected the nature of their response. For example, the bulk of my interviews took place in the months immediately leading up to winter. This meant that for the majority of NGOs their concern was primarily with the immediate practical survival for Gypsies, which tended to take precedence over more long term projects. Also, for many NGOs, funded projects were coming to an end, or had just recently been completed. This would result in an emphasis placed during the interview on issues surrounding funding and the problems associated with it.

Briggs also draws attention to the location of the interview as a factor to consider.[47] In most cases they took place in the NGO office, at the request of the interviewee. We

[47] Briggs, *op. cit.*

would normally be in a private place, whether it be a side or back room. This may have hindered the interviewee to some extent, in that it would have been more difficult to reflect clearly on the workings of the office when sitting within its walls. Nevertheless, these NGOs were generally user-friendly and visitors were a common occurrence. Therefore, if there were any obstacles to a thorough interview it was more to do with being distracted, rather than feeling uncomfortable or unable to talk.

The flexibility of the interview and my awareness of the shifting motivations on the part of myself and the interviewee allowed for an analysis of the interview at two levels: what they were saying and the significance of how they said it. In particular, by drawing on the exceptions, , i.e. when the interviewee departed from communicative norms of the conversation as a whole, it was possible to analyse the form as a means of exploring the content. For example, with some NGOs and significantly those run entirely by non-Gypsies, the interview became nothing more than a quasi-lecture on their part, where project 'successes' were reeled off as set out on their pamphlet almost word for word. This confident monologue pointed towards the distinct possibility that such NGOs were not quite so responsive to 'bottom-up' agencies as they liked to claim. However, it also indicated a typical behaviour pattern explicit in all NGOs regardless of whether they were Gypsy or Gadjo led. The grant application procedures that underpinned the survival of most foundations appeared to have engendered a pattern of focusing on 'successes' rather than acknowledging problems.

1.8 Participant observation in theory

Participant observation in a number of settings, and in particular with a Gypsy-led foundation formed a key part of my fieldwork. This type of research is generally taken to mean the engagement of a researcher in a particular social context. Their role is to experience, understand and then to explain it for a 'scientific' purpose. The Chicago

School of Social Research and in particular, Robert Park, first introduced to students the possibility of participant observation as a research methodology. By emphasising an inductive approach to research, whereby no firm assumptions existed prior to the fieldwork, it served to challenge a fundamental premise to the positivist scientific ideal, that is, the testing of a hypothesis.[48] Becker's definition of participant observation provided the basic understanding to which most researchers subscribed when working 'in the field':

> *The participant observer gathers data by participating in the daily life of the group in question or organisation he [sic] studies. He watches the people he is studying to see what situations they ordinarily meet and how they behave in them. He enters into conversation with some or all of the participants in these situations and discovers their interpretations of the events he has observed.* [49]

Its definition has since expanded in a number of directions. First, participant observation has become a catch-all term used to explain a combination of methods and techniques, namely: social interaction; direct observation; formal and informal interviewing; systematic counting; and the collection of documents or artefacts.[50] Second, researchers have developed a more profound understanding of the retrospective nature of participant observation in terms of the need to explicitly take into account the role of the researcher.[51] Burgess argues a point that is now regarded as essential to the effective carrying out of participant participation, that is, the recognition on the part of the researcher that s/he is part of the context that is being observed and, therefore, inevitably impacts upon the data.[52] As with the interview, it is the interaction between the

---

[48] Tim May, *Social Research Issues, Methods and Process*, Open University Press, Buckingham, 1993. pp. 111-112.
[49] H. S. Becker, "Problems of Inference and Proof in Participant Observation", *American Sociological Review*, 23 (6), 1958. p. 652.
[50] George J. McCall and J. L. Simmons (eds.), *Issues in Participant Observation: A Text and Reader*, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, London, 1969. p. 1.
[51] Morris S. Schwartz and Charlotte Green Schwartz, "Problems in Participant Observation." In McCall and Simmons, *ibid.*
[52] Burgess, *op. cit.* p. 80.

researcher and the participants that yields the data rather than a simple transmission of data.

Due to this responsive element, proponents of participant observation view it as the least likely out of all the qualitative methods, of being biased, unreliable or invalid. Another fundamental benefit of this type of methodology is that the researcher can study social *processes* as well as static situations. [53] Unlike survey methods, or even the interview, participant observation can go beyond snap-shot images, and allow for the exploration of a group or an organisation over a period of time. This general level of understanding of participant observation has been broken down further into a spectrum of degrees. Schwartz and Schwartz present a continuum of participation from passive to active.[54] Equally influential has been the typology proposed by Gold, who outlines four "ideal typical field roles": the complete participant; the participant-as-observer; the observer-as-participant; the complete observer.[55] These 'field roles' are not taken as fixed, but as constantly shifting in the course of the research process. For most researchers, myself included, the two most common field roles adopted are those of the participant-as-observer and the observer-as-participant. This allows for the effective blending of an insider's view, with that of an outsider.

Critiques of participant observation as a research method have developed that mainly see it as a romantic attempt 'to get close', which, it is argued, gives rise to whole series of ethical problems. This positivist critique rests on the idea that for any data to be valid, or scientific, it must remain untainted. The impact of the participant-observer on the subjects in question, therefore, is considered as detrimental to the transmission of 'pure'

---

[53] McCall and Simmons, *op. cit.* p. 2.
[54] Schwartz and Schwartz, *op. cit.* p. 94.
[55] Raymond L. Gold, "Roles in Sociological Field Observation", *Social Forces*, 36 (3), 1958.

data.[56] Stemming from this argument is the other popular critique which accuses the researcher opening themselves to the risk of 'going native', thereby sacrificing the required objectivity that is central to unbiased data collection and interpretation. Questions fundamental to qualitative methods in general are just as resonant here as with the ethnographic interview,

> *[participant oberservation] cannot be used to study past events; its ability to discriminate among rival hypotheses is weak by comparison with the experiment; and, in contrast, to the social survey, it is poor at dealing with large scale cases such as big organisations or national societies.*[57]

However, the increasing emphasis laid on the continual process of reflection and alteration in the research process serves to defend the role of the participant observer to a large extent. The researcher considers, reflects, develops and modifies impressions and theories from an informed position.[58] This is further backed up by Gold's continuum of field roles that show the relative stages at which the researcher can become involved or remain detached depending on the context. Therefore, rather than as a reason for dismissing such methods altogether, the benefits and criticisms of participant observation should be taken together in order to encourage the use of multiple methods that consider both quantitative and qualitative dimensions.

1.9 Participant observation in practice

A case study formed an important part of the analysis and was seen as a necessary methodological device given that existing studies of Gypsies in the NGO sector have so far been fairly limited. A focused case study allowed for a closer examination of the many variables at work within this setting and the connections between them. It also offered a coherent framework within which multiple research methods could be applied.

---

[56] May, *op. cit.* p. 130

[57] M. Hammersley and P.. Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, Tavistock, London, 1983. p. 237.

[58] May, *op. cit.* pp. 131-32.

Participant observation formed the main basis for this case study, which involved working with a foundation over a period of two weeks.

The foundation was situated in the heart of the largest Gypsy *mahala* in the Bulgarian capital, Sofia. Based on advice from Marushiakova and Popov, I took up the opportunity for closer involvement with this foundation. It arose from the interview, during which the director of the foundation invited me to come to the office 'to work' (without pay) in order that I take a closer look. It was clear from the outset that he was keen to have some kind of control over my visit. He employed a number of strategies in order to achieve this such as: specifying that he would co-ordinate all my future visits to the ghetto; assigning me specific tasks; and inviting me to certain social events. During the course of these two weeks I was able to observe a number of behaviour patterns on the part of the NGO leader and his staff. For example, the strategies to exert control that he employed with me were ones he frequently used with his staff.

Ultimately, the NGO leader was keen for me to see how a NGO 'really worked' and was relatively open with me, to the point of asking me for feedback whether it be negative or positive. This willingness to be open, in terms of problems as well as successes, laid the necessary groundwork for more effective participant observation. This was further enhanced by a close relationship I struck up with the main administrator, a trilingual Gypsy woman, fluent in Bulgarian, Romany and English. Her insider's knowledge, coupled with my own observations and interactions, enabled me, in spite of being an obvious outsider, to gain greater insight into the everyday workings of this NGO. In terms of this particular relationship, my status as an outsider was advantageous. She was able initially to relate to me, as she herself had had to come into the 'ghetto' from outside, having been brought up in an integrated estate on the other side of Sofia. Furthermore, like me, she had, at first, experienced difficulties with the Romany language. Being an

outsider was beneficial on a number of other occasions too. For example, the other 'outsider', , i.e. the Gadjo employee, also displayed evidence of being able to relate to me. This enabled me to gain some insight into how she perceived her own role within the Gypsy dominated workplace and in particular how she related with the others.

Unlike the Gadjo employee, however, I did not pose a threat to the others, as such, but more represented an object of intrigue. Rather than intruding into their territory, I was welcomed as someone who appeared to show an unbiased interest in their work.[59] Although I was there to carry out my research, I was not a representative from within the NGO sector. My status as impartial observer from their point of view was made clear from the start. My overt observer status shaped my relations with the staff in such a way that they took on the role of both respondents and informants. Therefore, while getting on with their own work, the staff members would take time, when appropriate, to explain to me various operations or activities as they occurred. As the days passed, and as far as my language allowed me, I became less of an 'observer' and more submerged into the workplace. We ate, joked and worked together. I caught the same buses to and from work as the others, worked for the same hours (from 9am until 6/7pm) and joined in whenever possible, such as in the writing of project proposals and sitting in on meetings.

Throughout the entire length of my research in Bulgaria, my status shifted from 'participant-as-observer' to 'observer-as-participant' depending on the contexts, whether they be formal, such as seminars, or informal, as in social events. For example, a one-off seminar organised by three partner NGOs required that I took on the role of observer-as-participant, in that I was primarily an observer, who had the occasional opportunity to

[59] Liebow too makes this point in his discussion on being an outsider. In his research with 'Negro street corner men', conducted in the 1960s, he noted that being an outsider was at times beneficial. Liebow was not considered a competitor, thus facilitating his observational work. Elliot Liebow, *Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Street Corner Men*, Little Brown, Boston Massachusetts, 1967.

participate. I did not share the hotel in which they were all staying and, due to the large scale of the event, the variety of attendees and the plenary nature of its presentation, my presence had little impact. There were times, however, when I did actively participate, such as in the workshops and in the social events, which provided me closer contact with some of the participants.[60]

I also had extended contact with two other NGOs, but, unlike with the Romani Bah Foundation, this did not constitute formal participant observation as such. Although I undertook interviews and had regular contact with both the Foundation for Regional Development and to a lesser extent the United Roma Union, I was never formally invited to 'work with' them. Instead, I tended to visit on a more informal basis. I would observe in and around the office, attend seminars, occasionally dine with them, or go with them on trips, some of which were part of their normal working day, and others which were specially organised as 'expeditions' (out to villages or to ghettos). This would involve me talking to workers and users of these NGOs on a casual basis (either through an interpreter or with someone there who could speak English).

Common to all my extensive contacts with NGOs was that I tended to work closely with just one of the members associated with the foundation in question. This meant that the information I was receiving and interpreting was being filtered through one individual's perspective. I was seeing how the NGO worked for them, according to their view. However, I was also conscious of this and accounted for it. I did not take their perspective as wholly representative and attempted to forge links with other staff members and to relate their comments to general observations I was making.

[60] This seminar is discussed in detail in section 12 of chapter 6.

1.10 Conclusions

Using a qualitative approach, whether it be through participant observation or interviewing, as a way of understanding and interpreting Gypsy responses to the transition does not in itself invalidate, nor indeed validate the research findings. One must be cautious of unwittingly equating experience (, i.e. being in Bulgaria) with authenticity.[61] At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that collecting 'stories' is one of the few resources open to researchers in this area. Miller and Glassner, while agreeing with Silverman that interviewers need not resort to 'romanticism', argue that, "what matters is to understand how and where the stories are produced, which sort of stories they are, and how we can put them to honest and intelligent use in theorising about social life." [62] In the context of my research, there are many stories to report, but to ensure their reliability and validity it is important to untangle both the various obstacles and insights that formed the essence of my fieldwork and its interpretation.

For interviewing to be reliable, it is generally considered that the same results would have to be gained by an independent observer if repeated, and to be valid, the interviewer must yield the 'correct answer' or put another way, observe and measure that which was intended.[63] However, the emphasis in qualitative methods on the interviewee using their own frame of reference makes the usual criteria of reliability and validity difficult to apply. This does not imply that qualitative field studies can legitimately remain immune from accusation of unreliability and invalidity, but that different sets of criteria have to be adopted.

---

[61] Silverman in his discussion on qualitative data warns us that we need to be cautious about the 'romantic' impulse to identify 'experience' with 'authenticity'. David Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*, Sage Publications, London, 1993.

[62] Miller and Glassner, *op. cit.* p. 111

[63] Raymond L. Gorden, *Interviewing Strategy, Techniques and Tactics*, The Dorsey Press, Homewood, Illinois, 1969; Jerome Kirk and Marc L. Miller, *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*, Qualitative Research Methods Series 1, Sage University Paper, Sage Publications, London, 1986. p. 19.

It is therefore important that I draw attention to the series of practical and analytical problems that I encountered during the course of my fieldwork: First, the distinct lack of substantial and reliable empirical data on Gypsies and their activities meant that it was difficult to get a broad picture of the situation and to rise above anecdotal evidence (a common critique of small scale quantitative research).

Second, as already addressed, there was the difficulty of the double outsider looking in, , i.e. I was non-Gypsy and non-Bulgarian which rendered me in a possibly suspicious position. For example, an executive director of one NGO was openly suspicious of me and made cryptic comments about the ignorance of outsiders.[64] In most cases, however, I had a warm welcome and in some cases was able to build up trust. The other side of the coin of course is that in such a position I was able to be more objective (especially important in this highly fraught world of NGO power politics), and in some cases relate better with other 'outsiders'.

Third, there was the language barrier. Relying on an interpreter carried with it specific problems of its own.[65] Receiving information second hand inevitably leads to the risk of distortion and bias however competent the interpreter might be. The use of an interpreter proved most problematic in those cases where I was interviewing a Gypsy-led NGO with an interpreter from outside the Gypsy community. Many of my most fruitful exchanges were with Gypsies within the NGO sector who could speak English fluently.

Fourth, the extent to which I was able to gain access to the real, or authentic, mechanisms of these NGOs was not as straightforward as it first appeared. Getting beyond the NGO's well-rehearsed song is a major task. Part of this was the difficulty of

[64] Interview : B (1) 17.3.98

[65] I had a mixture of Gypsy and non-Gypsy interpreters from a variety of backgrounds.

talking to spokespeople who had vested interests, creating the need to disentangle political rhetoric from valid points. Spradley describes this as 'translation competence', which he uses to refer to the ethnographically undesirable tendency of informants to provide 'pre-packaged, party line [...] answers' to questions posed by the researcher.[66] Rather, than an impenetrable barrier, however, it forces the researcher to rethink interview tactics. In my case, this led to freeing up the interview process further and complementing it with other sources of information as discussed above.

Finally, the limited time scale, problems of language and my NGO approach meant I had direct access to only one particular strand of Gypsies, , i.e. mainly those who were educated. My research did not intend to produce an ethnography of Gypsy NGOs, nor to cover the entire spectrum of Gypsy NGOs, but to focus on the most dynamic NGOs working in this area. In addressing the question of NGO strategies providing the solution to social exclusion it was necessary to examine those NGOs in particular, which were generally taken as successful. Rather than adopting a form of "NGO tourism", which Stubbs argues does not acknowledge its method of selection and therefore falls risk of misrepresentation and bias, I consciously selected key NGOs in order to unravel some of the criteria that underpins apparently 'successful' projects of participation and community development.[67]

Ultimately, the NGO sector provided me with a sound basis for my fieldwork and a vital source of insight. It was both extremely topical and it enabled me access to an intriguing area of activity during the 'transition', of which Gypsies have been a defining part. By using my fieldwork to complement and interrogate, rather than replace existing data, I

---

[66] Spradley, *op. cit.*

[67] Paul Stubbs, *Developing an Evaluation Model for Grass roots Social Reconstruction and Peace-Building Projects.* Mimeo, ISPRU, 1996.

have tried to create a foundation from which to develop an analysis that explores the wider nature of social exclusion theory and its use in policy design.

CHAPTER 2

SOCIAL EXCLUSION: THE CONCEPT

2.1 Introduction

Social exclusion theory seeks to explain a variety of scenarios in which individuals, or entire social groups are defined as being 'excluded' from vital social, economic and political processes. The emphasis on relational rather than distributional issues has shaped a literature that attempts to describe and account for movements into and out of certain key areas of social activity with little discussion on income redistribution. The areas which individuals or groups are described as excluded from are almost indefinite, such as: goods and services; a livelihood; the labour market; land; security; human rights; macro-economic development strategy; social services/welfare; consumer culture; political choice; bases for popular action; and an understanding of what is going on. The causes of social exclusion are sought through a multiple exploration of both external factors and personal attributes. Depending on the research interest, the excluded may be identified according to their level of political participation and social interaction, the degree to which they have been educated, their spatial location, their ethnic origin, or their health status.

This multidimensional approach enables social exclusion theorists to place a vast number of diverse groups under one umbrella, from the disabled, and single parents, to the homeless, and Gypsies. As a result, social exclusion is valued not only for its ability to "offer valuable insights for the analysis of the links between poverty, productive employment, and social integration", but also for its scope to explore the relations between different social groups.[1] In the words of the International Institute for Labour Studies and the UNDP, social exclusion is used in order,

---

[1] Charles Gore *et. al.* "Markets, Citizenship and Social Exclusion." In Gerry Rodgers *et al.* (eds.) *Social Exclusion: Rhetoric Reality Responses*, International Institute for Labour Studies and UNDP, Geneva, 1995. p. 12.

> *to capture the inter-relationships between the material and non-material aspects of deprivation; to provide a better understanding of the way they interact with the processes of economic growth; and to relate them to the concepts of participation and social solidarity [...].* [2]

In the light of recent philosophical developments, namely the post-modern rejection of objective analysis in favour of the need to recognise a whole series of subjective 'truths', the social exclusion approach of drawing together a diverse range of oppressions has proved popular for many theorists.[3] Reinforced by on-going debates that claim we have witnessed the triumph of the liberal order and so reached 'the end of history', and coupled with heightened concerns about economic crises, nationalist wars and social instability, this has provided the necessary fertile environment for such a broad concept as social exclusion to live and grow.[4] It is argued that while rendering insufficient traditional criteria for measurement, these forces can prevent the development of reliable alternatives. Nevertheless, strategies of inclusion have emerged as the 'answer' to social exclusion and slogans of 'equality through inclusion' are increasingly influential at the level of government policy in the West, and in the development of NGO strategies in post-1989 Eastern Europe.[5]

This chapter begins with a brief discussion on the concept of poverty and class analysis in order to show the context out of which social exclusion has grown. The theoretical roots of social exclusion are then explored drawing on debates about marginality, the

---

[2] Rodgers *et al.* (eds.), *op. cit.* p. vi.

[3] For example, Gerry Rodgers. *et al. Overcoming Exclusion: Livelihood and Rights in Economic and Social Development*, International Labour Organisation, UNDP, Geneva, 1994; G. Rodgers, C. Gore and J. B. Figeiredo (eds.), *Social Exclusion: Rhetoric Reality Responses*, International Institute for Labour Studies and UNDP, Geneva, 1995; Natalia Tchernina, *Economic Transition and Social Exclusion in Russia*, Research Series 108, International Institute for Labour Studies and UNDP, Geneva, 1996.

[4] See for example Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*, Free Press of Glencoe, Illonois, 1960; and more recently Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and The Last Man*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1992.

[5] E.g. *The Guardian*, September 22nd 1998. p. 19. The UK Government, in setting up a Social Exclusion Unit, and in launching the Third Way are explicitly using policies of inclusion as their main strategy against inequality. Likewise, in the countries of Eastern Europe, increasing support of the NGO sector implies a similar concern with finding ways to include 'excluded' groups.

underclass and culture of poverty. The current use of social exclusion theory and reasons for its apparent superiority over theories of poverty and class are then examined in the light of both its benefits and drawbacks. Formal responses to 'social exclusion' are addressed next in terms of the various strategies of inclusion that have been adopted by governments and policy makers, with special reference to the NGO sector in Eastern Europe. Finally, we suggest that one of the key problems with social exclusion theory is its failure to explain, or account for the possibility of resistance on the part of those groups dismissed as excluded.

2.2 The concept of poverty and class analysis

The analysis of poverty took on particular significance towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, with the move away from traditional views of blaming the poor towards a more systematic approach of its definition and measurement.[6] Booth and Rowntree in Britain were key thinkers at the turn of the century with their 'scientific' investigations into poverty.[7] Booth's study of London distinguished between 'poor' and 'very poor' and rested on detailed house-to-house investigations. Rowntree, greatly influenced by Booth, took this approach one step further. He also investigated primary and secondary poverty, but was more precise in terms of pinpointing a minimum income necessary for 'physical efficiency'. He considered factors of calorie intake, shelter and household sundries for the setting of a poverty line. Published in 1901, the results of Rowntree served to confirm Booth's earlier claim that poverty afflicted substantial numbers in Britain. Not only did these early investigations of poverty serve to offer more realistic accounts of the poor in terms of their actual numbers, they also changed the way in which poverty was defined. Most

---

[6] Robert Holman, *Poverty - Explanations of Social Deprivation,* Martin Robertson, London, 1978.

[7] Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People,* Vol.1 Williams and Norgate, 1889, and Seebohm Rowntree, *Poverty: A Study of Town Life*, Macmillan, 1901, cited in Holman, *ibid.*

significantly, Booth and Rowntree triggered a poverty debate that moved the emphasis away form personal failure towards a more structural analysis.[8]

However structured the analysis of poverty became, the emphasis on individualism has also remained embedded in the discourse of liberal democracy in Europe. Two key political trends emerged, however, which challenged this liberal agenda, namely, the Marxist tradition and the social democratic tradition. Although they both emphasised the importance of class and of wealth redistribution, their ideas of how to tackle inequality differed greatly. The Marxist approach to poverty and inequality rests on the belief that in order for genuine equality to be achieved the political economy of capitalism must first be abolished. The social democratic tradition, on the other hand emphasises the role of the state within the capitalist model in providing solutions to poverty. Its goal therefore is reform rather than revolution.

The economic difficulties of capitalism during the inter-war years had major repercussions in terms of rising levels of mass poverty and in turn how it was to be addressed. For many it served to confirm Marxist predictions about the inherent contradictions of capitalism. However, the economic boom in the West in the immediate post-war period helped to restore a general faith in capitalism and thus in the social democratic tradition of reform. But despite economic growth, mass poverty on a global scale remained a feature of the post-war period. Its measurement usually took the form of comparative statistical estimates of per-capita income, which were then compared to the advanced world. The emergence of this vertical comparison meant that, in the words of

[8] Bound by their time, both Booth and Rowntree believed that many of the poor were individually responsible for their poverty. Booth expressed contempt with their vices of drink, laziness and bad company, and Rowntree argued that the poor would have had more of an income if they had chosen not to waste it. However, their overriding concern was not so much with laying the blame with the poor, but with finding effective ways of measuring poverty.

Sachs, "poverty was used to define whole peoples, not according to what they are and want to be, but according to what they lack and are expected to become".[9]

This laid the groundwork for a shift in policy approach towards poverty that rested on ideas of 'economic development' and reform, rather than on analyses of oppressive structures. By the late 1960s, however, it was clear that programmes of 'economic development' were not working. Out of this emerged new attempts at measuring poverty not so much in terms of per capita income, but in terms of 'quality of life'.[10] In the subsequent context of gradual economic decline and ever widening social inequality within as well as between countries, major explanations of poverty reverted back to individual deficiencies and cultural deprivations, coupled with an acknowledgement of failings within social services. Ideas of the underclass, marginality and social exclusion have all been part of this distinct shift away from structural analyses of class inequality, poverty and redistribution.

2.3 Social exclusion and its theoretical roots

The concept of social exclusion finds its origins in a number of theoretical traditions and consequently has within it a number of discourses. Levitas in her study of the use of the concept of social exclusion in British government policy, identifies three separate discourses within the overall social exclusion approach: a redistributionist discourse, developed in British critical social policy, whose prime concern is with poverty; a moral underclass discourse, which centres on the moral and behavioural delinquency of the excluded themselves; and a social integrationist discourse whose central focus is on paid work.[11] While intellectually it is possible to distinguish equally between these three

---

[9] Wolfgang Sachs, "The Discovery of Poverty", *New Internationalist*, 232, June, 1992. p. 8.
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] Ruth Levitas, *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour*, Macmillan, London, 1998.

different types of social exclusion discourse, in popular policy terms the moral underclass discourse seems to be the most dominant.

For the purposes of this thesis therefore, I will focus on the evolution of the second discourse for the following two reasons. Firstly, the question of Gypsy survival in contemporary Bulgaria rests upon structures of oppression that rely on their association with ideas of 'backwardness' and 'deviancy'; the very essence of the 'moral underclass discourse'. Secondly, this particular strand of social exclusion theory potentially has the most questionable political implications, in terms of the possible detrimental effect it can have on the oppressed groups in question; yet it is the one that holds most strongly in popular discourse.

The most often cited origin of social exclusion theory in terms of its moral impetus lies with French welfare thought during the 1960s and 1970s.[12] It was in 1974 that the specific phraseology of social exclusion was first officially used in France. Lenoir, the then State Secretary of Social Action under the Gaullist Chirac government, coined the phrase of social exclusion to refer to various categories of people who remained unprotected by social insurance. These included 'mentally and physically handicapped, suicidal, aged invalids, substance users, delinquents, single parents, marginal, asocial and other social misfits.'[13] The apparently stigmatising element to this definition of the socially excluded as 'misfits' did not initially earn it wide appeal, although it did influence on-going debates about welfare dependency and the nature of 'new' poverty.

While the concern of the French government was one informed by a Republican sense of social solidarity and citizenship, in the rest of Europe commentators turned their

---

[12] See for example, Paul Spicker, "Exclusion", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 35 (1), March, 1997.
[13] Quoted in Gore, *op. cit.* p. 1.

attention more towards the effects that technological change and economic restructuring were having on poverty. More recently, however, with the idea of social exclusion entering into mainstream debates we have seen a gradual shift across Europe away from an exclusive analysis of poverty to one that also emphasises citizenship and the role of personal attributes:

> *Lack of finance may cause people to withdraw into their families and into themselves, while a criminal record, immigrant status or homelessness may preclude someone from work and self-sufficiency, thereby precipitating some form of poverty.*[14]

The causes of poverty in this case seem to be subtly distanced from a structural analysis to one that homes in on local causes and personal factors. Though it would be misleading to dismiss entirely the structural element to social exclusion theory at the same time it serves to reveal some of the key problems with this type of analysis. There are three levels of structural analysis to social exclusion theory. First, social exclusion theory rests on the analysis of the relations between the individual or groups and the market. Although at first sight promising, this approach seems to be informed more by a political concern over the limits of welfare provision than by any concern with tackling the structural causes of inequality.

Second, social exclusion theory rests on the identification of local factors as possible causes. This can allow a multi-dimensional approach, but it can also lead to an incoherent framework which treats the causes of poverty as a series of otherwise disconnected events and symptoms. In order that the causes of inequality be understood, i.e. that at the most basic level it is a product of a conflict of interests, critics of social exclusion argue that it is necessary to acknowledge as primary the structural obstacles

---

[14] Robert Walker, "Poverty and Social Exclusion in Europe." In Alan Walker and Carol Walker (eds.) *Britain Divided - The Growth of Social Exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s*, CPAG, London, 1997. p. 64. This description of social exclusion highlights clearly how the adjusted starting point avoids the fundamental question of *why* certain groups lack finance, commit crime, emigrate, or become homeless in the first place.

inherent in a class society that prevent certain groups from competing equally. By failing to recognise this, social exclusion theory may therefore run the risk of preventing rather than enhancing the development of a coherent framework of analysis.

Finally, and partly tied in with this lies the most controversial element to social exclusion theory; that is, the emphasis for many actors on the 'excluded' individual or group in question rather than on the structural obstacles to inequality. Although framed within a discourse of 'democracy', 'participation', and/or 'integration', social exclusion theory can ultimately help to place the responsibility of poverty back with the individual. Therefore, rather than dealing with, for example, the *reasons* for uneven unemployment, strategies are designed to simply encourage the 'socially excluded' to help themselves out of poverty. Although this may involve sophisticated and complex procedures that operate at a number of levels, the principle remains that it is the 'socially excluded' themselves who must ultimately be targeted. These three elements to social exclusion theory, the concern with welfare limits, the identification of local factors, the emphasis on the individual, all indicate a clear link with earlier theories of the underclass, marginality, and the culture of poverty.

2.4 Marginality and the underclass.

Though it has been claimed that social exclusion theory offers an alternative to discredited theories such as that of 'marginality' and 'the underclass', it is precisely these theories that have contributed to the rationale that lies behind its current use.[15] Spicker, for example, sees the popular definition of social exclusion as resting on the idea of there being an "absence of social relationships and obligations [implying] that people do not

[15] For example, John Hills, the head of the Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion, LSE in his paper "Researching Social Exclusion" at the one-day conference *Social Exclusion and the City*, convened by Professor Chris Hamnett, Kings College London and the Royal Geographical Society, 29 October 1998.

share fully the dominant norms of society." In much the same way, he notes, that "marginal" people are seen as being "alienated from the dominant social context."[16]

Indeed at a rhetorical level, the pairing of exclusion with marginality is explicit. Kennett's discussion on exclusion in the 'new Europe' reveals the ease with which concepts of marginality and social exclusion are used in conjunction with poverty; "the increase in the number of marginal households has been accompanied by a rise in the most extreme and visible form of poverty and exclusion."[17] The interchangeable use of marginality and exclusion can also be found in official European Community documents:

> *For some years now we have used the terms 'marginalization' and 'social exclusion' to denote the severest forms of poverty. Marginalization describes people living on the edge of society while the socially excluded have been shut out completely from conventional social norms.*[18]

Government officials in the West have also been known to have used both the terminology of underclass and social exclusion within one context.[19] In Britain for example during a speech to the Tory Reform Group on 24 November 1991, Rt. Hon Kenneth Clarke QC MP spoke about, "the growth of a so-called underclass", which he saw as representing, "the most formidable challenge to a secure and civilised way of life". As a result, he argued, "society cannot afford to alienate and exclude significant numbers of the poor, the black and the young."[20]

---

[16] Spicker, *op. cit.* p. 135.

[17] Patricia Kennett, "Exclusion, Post-Fordism, and the 'New Europe'." In Phillip Brown and Rosemary Crompton (eds.) *A New Europe? - Economic Restructuring and Social Exclusion*, UCL Press, London, 1994. p. 26.

[18] Economic and Social Consultative Assembly, *Poverty*, European Communities Economic and Social Committee, Brussels, 1989. Ch. 7. Quoted in Spicker, *op. cit.* p. 136.

[19] A point made by Mark Kleinman, "New Deals, Old Barriers" *The Guardian*, 30 September, 1998.

[20] Quoted in Carey Oppenheim, *Poverty: The Facts*, CPAG, London, 1993. p. 20.

At a theoretical level, these concepts all contain, to varying degrees, ideas of isolation, backwardness, and a sense of imminent social threat. 'Marginality' was first used as a descriptive term applied to the inhabitants of shanty towns in South America in the 1960s and 1970s.[21] This theory soon developed and expanded to include aspects other than just physical habitation, areas other than South America, and ideas that had roots in other discourses. Perlman encapsulates the essence of marginality as one informed by a sense of threat and of inevitability:

> *The incapacity of the economy to absorb the 'marginals' into the labour force accentuated the threat of social and political disruption. This contradiction between the dread of 'growing barbarian masses' in the cities and the awareness of its unavoidable existence underlies the ideology of marginality.*[22]

Underclass theory, rooted in an anxiety over the rapidly expanding urban ghettoised poor in 1960s USA, is also concerned with a fear of the masses, not only in terms of their threat to the moral and social order, but also in terms of their strain on the welfare state.[23] This view of a dual society as one that threatens the status-quo has informed analysts on both sides of the Atlantic. Peterson, writing in the US, for example, argues, "the major problem is the way in which a spreading underclass culture is undermining the country's productive capacity, family life, social integration, and ultimately, its political stability."[24] While in Europe, a similar sentiment is expressed in the Delors White Paper on the subject of 'Targeting Specific Groups', which argues that, "the community now faces the danger of not only a dual labour market but a dual society."[25] Although,

---

[21] J. E. Perlman, *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro*, California University Press, California, 1976. p. 92.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] The strain on welfare is also a major concern for European governments and of social exclusion theorists. A conference was held on this subject in 1995 (18-20 October) in Santiago de Compostela, entitled *Social Exclusion: A Major Challenge for Public Welfare Services*, organised by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

[24] P. E. Peterson, "The Urban Underclass and the Poverty Paradox." In Christopher Jencks and Paul E. Peterson (eds.), *The Urban Underclass*, Washington Brookings Institute, Washington D.C. 1991. p. 9.

[25] Quoted in Katherine Duffy, *Social Exclusion and Human Dignity in Europe: Background Report for the Proposed Initiative by the Council of Europe*, Activity II 1b, Steering Committee on Social Policy, CDPS (95)1, 1995. p. 36.

somewhat diluted in its judgement of the poor, social exclusion theory has within it a similar sense of urgency that also permeate fears of a 'dual society'. As encapsulated by Yepez de Castillo,

> *The multiplicity of the forms of exclusion, the fear it inspires as to possible social explosions, the risk of breaking up of social cohesion that it carries, the complexity of the social mechanisms at stake make it the great social question of our time.*[26]

This perception of threat contrasts with the apparent nullification of the underclass, or the marginalised, who, at the same time, are seen as accepting their lot. This raises important questions about ideas of poverty and the poor. In particular, the notion that marginalised and poverty stricken groups either actively, or with resignation, collude with their segregation from basic societal functions provides the basis for the argument that there are groups who fall entirely outside of social stratification. Such groups, whether they be labelled as socially excluded, marginals or the underclass, are grouped together by a series of attributed traits, which, by their nature, diverge from the dominant norms. These divergent traits may rest on types of family organisation, community values or material aspirations, the point being that they represent a departure from important moral norms.[27] Desel's participation theory, for example, rests on the presumption that the marginalisation of certain groups is caused by a lack of internal organisation and therefore political participation. This, he argues, pushes the group in question entirely off the social scale. Hence, the 'marginals' "populate a piece of land which is no-man's land."[28]

---

[26] Duffy, *op. cit.* p. 33.

[27] *Ibid.* pp. 3-4. This has similar overtones to the views expressed by Charles Murray, who, in the *Sunday Times*, defined the characteristics of the 'underclass' as follows: high rates of illegitimacy, of crime and of drop-out from the labour market. 26 November 1989. See also Ruth Lister (ed.), *Charles Murray and the Underclass: The Developing Debate*, IEA Health and Welfare Unit, London, 1996.

[28] Quoted by Perlman, *op. cit.* p. 119.

Matthews, too, in his discussion on poverty in the former Soviet Union, draws explicitly on this idea of isolation and detachment: "Separated from the whole world, and from one another, [...] [the poor] are deprived of the right to education and skills, to enjoy culture, move about, [...] to labour, enjoy proper food, medical services, housing [...]."[29] Since the collapse of Communism, concerns with poverty groups have escalated, giving rise to debates on poverty culture, such as with Chernina, who discusses poverty in Russia as a social phenomenon. Her argument, too, rests on an understanding of poverty as something characterised by "solitude, [and] a loss by the individual of social bonds."[30]

Germani has explored the extent to which there is a direct relationship between marginality, social stratification and poverty.[31] In the same manner as Desel, he distinguishes between the lower classes and those 'outcasts' who, on the margins of society, do not partake in social stratification. Unlike Desel, however, he views marginality as a factor inextricably tied to modernisation, in that the social, economic, and political forces of modernisation have necessitated the existence of marginal groups, i.e. the persistent sectors of the population that are perceived as segregated, excluded and marginalised from full participation in society. The incapacity of a system to absorb the totality of its population is seen by Germani as a direct result of the particular type of a given socio-economic order.[32] Germani's stance as one concerned more with structural causes reflects a shift in analysis whereby marginality is seen as more a result of the socio-economic order, rather than a product of the negative qualities innate to 'marginals'.

---

[29] Mervyn Matthews, *Poverty in the Soviet Union*, University of Cambridge Press, Cambridge, 1986. p. 188.
[30] N. V. Chernina, "Poverty as a Social Phenomenon in Russian Society", *Russian Sociological Review*, July/August 1995. pp. 13-14.
[31] Gino Germani, *Marginality*, Transaction Books, New Jersey, 1980.
[32] *Ibid.* p. 12.

A number of other philosophers and scholars have touched upon ideas of marginality as part of their wider work, in their attempt to account for factors other than class. For example in *Capital* Marx distinguished between the 'relative surplus population' or 'an industrial reserve army' which are seen as performing a vital function in capitalist society and all those groups defined as marginal who do not meet the basic requirements of a class.[33] In Marxian terms successful capitalist development rested upon the existence of 'relative surplus army', i.e. 'great masses' of available labour which through its expansion or contraction helped regulate the general movement of wages. Marx therefore was able to explain unemployment, underemployment and poverty as necessary features of capitalism rather than as rooted in individual morality. However, Marx's 'lumpenproletariat' did not form part of this analysis and contained moralistic overtones whereby the "lowest sediment of the relative surplus-population" consisted of "vagabonds, criminals and prostitutes"[34] and were defined as "the dangerous class, the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off the lowest layers of the old society."[35] Marx was clearly distinguishing between a specific condition of capitalist development, to which class oppression is central, and the condition of marginality.

Subsequent Marxists however have not necessarily agreed with Marx's idea of a 'lumpenproletariat' and are keen today to stress causal links between extreme examples of poverty and wider patterns of class inequality. Indeed, studies have been carried out that attempt to illustrate that there is little empirical evidence to support the cultural interpretation of an 'underclass' in whatever terms it may be expressed. For example, a study carried out in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in Britain, of attitudes of families who were

---

[33] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy,* Vol. 1, Penguin Classics, Middlesex, 1990 (original 1887). Chapter 25, section 4.

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party." In Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Lawrence and Wishart, Moscow and London, 1950. p. 42.

long term unemployed and on benefit draws an important distinction between monetary income and societal aspirations,

> *[they] are in no sense a detached and isolated group cut off from the rest of society. They are just the same people as the rest of our population, with the same culture and aspirations but with simply no money to be able to share in the activities and possessions of everyday life with the rest of the population.*[36]

Other theorists however have dismissed class altogether. Influenced by Weber's theory of life chances, Murphy's analysis on monopolisation, for example, uses the term 'closure' to refer to the process of subordination, whereby one group monopolises advantages by closing off opportunities to another group of outsiders.[37] Dickie-Clark argues along similar lines, "the dominant group may encourage subordinates to adopt some of their attitudes, but, if they want to stay dominant, they can't permit the subordinate strata to share in their powers or opportunities."[38] In these cases, the oppression of certain groups is seen as nothing more than a by-product of power relations. Whatever the context, the implication, however, is always the same. In the words of Morris, "the creation of a residual category of the underclass [...] is a response which confines attention to a limited social grouping, allowing perceptions of the rest of society to remain largely undisturbed." [39]

The defining of 'socially excluded' groups as those who stand outside of all previous analyses, whether they be class, power, or social stratification, has opened the way for theories that can legitimately lay the bulk of responsibility with the oppressed groups themselves. Perlman, for example, in her discussion on the myths of marginality has

---

[36] J. Bradshaw and H. Holmes, *Living on the Edge: A Study of the Living Standards of Families on Benefit in Tyne and Wear*, Tyneside, CPAG, 1989, quoted in Oppenheim, *op. cit.* p. 24.

[37] Raymond Murphy, *Social Closure-The Theory of Monopolisation and Exclusion*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988.

[38] Quoted in Perlman, *op. cit.* p. 102.

[39] Lydia Morris, *Dangerous Classes: The Underclass and Social Citizenship*, Routledge, London and New York, 1994. p. 157.

identified various schools of thought within the victim-blaming tradition. The 'Traditionality/Modernization school', for example, argues that marginality occurs because rural migrants lack 'modern' attitudes and behaviour, which rests on the idea of backwardness. Likewise the 'Ethnographic school' attributes marginality to the persistence of rural customs in an otherwise urban setting, which suggests not only backwardness, but also an element of deviancy.[40] These approaches in their emphasis on the customs and qualities of the groups in question reveal an affinity with the debates on culture of poverty.

2.5 The culture of poverty

As a concept, the culture of poverty was first introduced by Oscar Lewis, in 1959, with his book of Mexican case studies. He defined 'culture of poverty' as a cross-cultural 'regularity' transcending regional, rural-urban and national differences. He argued that "a culture of poverty is thus a design for living within the constraints of poverty, passed down from generation to generation, thereby achieving stability and persistence."[41] In this scenario, a culture of poverty arises out of a combination of the following factors: high rate of unemployment, low pay and little formal organisation coupled with the imposed view that poverty is a result of inferiority and personal inadequacy. It was not until 1963, and the publication of *The Other America* written by Michael Harrington, that this concept entered mainstream debate and took on explicit ideological overtones.[42] He used the culture of poverty thesis as a tool to appeal for social reform, yet at the same time his emphasis on poverty culture as a mode of behaviour learned within the community had ambiguous implications for shaping a particular view of the poor.

---

[40] Perlman, *op. cit.* pp. 106-8.

[41] Cited in Alf Hannerz, *Soulside -Inquiries into Ghetto Culture and Community*, Columbia University Press, NY and London, 1969. pp. 178-180.

[42] Michael Harrington, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States*, Penguin Books, Middlesex and Baltimore, 1963.

The growing ethnographic interest in urban poverty cultures, gave rise most significantly to a cluster of studies on 'ghetto culture'. The 'ghetto' was a term originally used in Venice in the early 16th century and then throughout Europe to describe the restricted areas to which Jews were formally confined. In the twentieth century it was most famously applied to inner cities or slums in the USA, and is still used today to describe not only the geographical location of poor segregated quarters, but also to depict the nature of the community who live there.[43] As with culture of poverty theories, the theory of ghetto culture has a specific ideological premise:

> *By pointing particularly to non-adaptive, not to say immoral behaviour among the poor, they have often been able to refuse responsibility for life at the bottom of society. If promiscuity, births out of wedlock, alcoholism, conspicuous consumption, and unemployment (defined as voluntary) are parts of a cultural heritage, it could beheld that the culture of poverty causes poverty, rather than the other way round.*[44]

Hannerz, in his study of the Winston Street neighbourhood of Washington DC between 1966-68, tackled the question of how far inhabitants were constrained by the nature of the situation they were in, or whether they acted in accordance to their culture and circumstances. He emphasised the situational as well as cultural elements to their oppression, and also stressed that mainstream values were in fact transmitted in the ghetto and that the poor did share mainstream ideals.[45] Maclead, in his study of young people in a low income neighbourhood in the USA in the 1980s, went one step further. His work explicitly shifted the emphasis from individual deficits to structural inequality, where he took the features associated with so-called poverty culture and placed them into the very structures of class society.[46]

---

[43] Harrington, *op. cit.* pp. 11-12. There are clear parallels between the association of ghettos with the black underclass in the USA during the 1960s and the current concern over Gypsy ghettos in Eastern Europe.

[44] Hannerz, *op. cit.* p. 180.

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] Jay Maclead, *Ain't No Makin' It - Aspirations and Attainment in a Low Income Neighbourhood*, Westview Press, Boulder, Oxford, 1995 (reprint of 1987). See also Paul Willis, *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, Saxon House, Farnborough, 1977.

Ultimately, both these studies reveal that the culture of poverty thesis can have racist overtones, where cultural deprivation, or absence of *mainstream* culture was used in conjunction with ideas of moral dissolution and a socially undeserving black underclass.[47] The equating of race to poverty culture, or lack of culture, and in turn to factors of poverty, such as unemployment, low wages and crowded quarters, served, and continues to serve an explicit ideological function. Although not explicit in social exclusion theory, the implications of inevitability and backwardness for certain groups are also there. In the case of Gypsies in Eastern Europe, similar assumptions are made about lack of culture, and moral dissolution. At a societal level at least, Gypsies in Eastern Europe are regarded most extremely as parasites, who deserve their fate. Although it does not use such extreme language, the liberal response to 'social exclusion' and its strategy of inclusion does imply a similar sentiment, that, unless Gypsies 'show willing', they will continue to perpetuate their own exclusion.

Underpinning this approach is an emphasis on individual agency that, although it may seem promising, has ambiguous ideological implications. Social exclusion theorists argue that the oppressed are agents of social change. However, investing the 'socially excluded' with the potential for social change in this sense could also serve to justify the argument that ultimately it is their own fault if inclusion strategies fail to work. It becomes apparent, therefore, that the ideological content of the idea of 'culture of poverty' and 'the underclass' are not so far removed from theories of social exclusion as might at first sight appear. For example MacPherson's discussion on 'social exclusion' and in particular exclusion from markets in Peru identifies two types of market: those from which people are excluded because they do not have sufficient resources (income,

[47] Maclead, *op.cit.* p. 241.

productive capacity), and those from which groups are excluded even though they have the appropriate resources. This takes into consideration both the personal attributes of the excluded groups and the structures that prevent able and willing groups. However, in his discussion on exclusion and civil society, it is the personal attributes of the excluded that ultimately take precedence outweighing the structural obstacles to social and political change:

> *People respond to social exclusion in various ways. These can range from passivity, shame and despair on the one hand, through to group action to reverse the process of exclusion, or to alter political circumstances [...] The most common response is passivity. In many cases of the studies socially excluded groups experienced a sense of worthlessness, or impotence which makes their social exclusion even more complete. [...] In general the case studies report social exclusion as most often associated with resignation and a sense of worthlessness, which paralyses action rather than producing resistance.*[48]

Despite these controversial beginnings, the concept of social exclusion has evolved out of the view that openly stigmatises excluded groups into a conceptual tool that has been injected into nearly every sphere of social analysis and across different national contexts. In a relatively short period of time, social exclusion theory has become hugely popular among Western policy makers and analysts even at the international level to provide a framework for describing 'new' patterns of poverty, deprivation, and social disadvantage.[49] For example, the 1993 Symposium on Poverty, which explicitly addressed the question of social exclusion, expressed a concern with low level participation and marginalisation,

> *The deepening of social inequalities, labour market segmentation, and changes in the quantity and quality of jobs are now occurring in all countries - in the developed economies as well as in countries undertaking economic reform or undergoing economic*

---

[48] Stewart MacPherson, "Social Exclusion - Review Article", *Journal of Social Policy*, 26 (4), 1997. p. 539. The view that responses to social exclusion lie on a continuum, coupled with the possibilities for resistance are discussed in relation to Gypsies during the transition in chapter 7.

[49] Natalia Tchernina, *Economic Transition and Social Exclusion in Russia*, Research Series 108, International institute for Labour Studies and UNDP, Geneva, 1996. Also, Rodgers *et. al.*, *op. cit.*

> *transition. These changes are marked by varying degrees of participation or marginalisation of different groups and individuals in civil and political society.*[50]

The theory of marginality clearly still has a role to play in policy making on social exclusion. This reveals the roots of 'new' approaches to social exclusion and exposes the continuation of 'old' concerns. The use of social exclusion serves to keep the focus of analysis on the poor, rather than on the structures of social inequality. Indeed, Perlman's critique of marginality theory over twenty years ago still holds today, where marginality, or as most recently labelled, social exclusion, "based on a set of loosely related rather ambiguous hypotheses", acts as a shield to existing ideological debates.[51]

2.6 The benefits of social exclusion theory

The theory of social exclusion is presented as offering the necessary next step on from poverty analysis and has rapidly taken centre stage in government policy welcomed for its flexibility and multidimensional framework.[52] The adoption of social exclusion theory is seen as a timely response to the changing face of Europe, where both the creation of a European single market, and the collapse of Eastern Europe has opened up new competitive pressures coupled with latent national and minority conflicts.[53] This is illustrated in the massive growth of research projects commissioned by multilateral institutions aimed at measuring and analysing the phenomena of social exclusion. International institutions, such as the European Social and Economic Research Council, the ILO, and the UNDP, coupled with national bodies, such as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in the UK, appear to be the key players in the search for 'solutions' to social

---

[50] Quoted in Rodgers *et. al., op. cit.* Preface. p. v.

[51] Perlman, *op. cit.* p. 91.

[52] Ajit Bhalla and Frederic Lapeyre argue, for example, that the multifaceted nature of social exclusion theory goes beyond the restrictive economic bias of poverty based analysis "Social Exclusion: Towards an Analytical and Operational Framework" *Development and Change*, 28, 1997. pp. 413-433.

[53] Argued in Brown and Crompton (eds.), *op. cit.* pp. 1-5.

exclusion, which are shaping new research agendas across Europe.[54] The suspicion exists, however, as Berghman puts it that, social exclusion theory offers a means by which EU members can convey a sense of moral concern, yet at the same time avoid the problems which the idea of poverty seemed to create.[55]

Analyses that rely exclusively on ideas of poverty have been rejected by social exclusion theorists on a number of counts. First, it is seen as static and too restrictive in its reliance on snap shots of income and household data. Social exclusion theory is seen as adding to poverty analysis, in terms of addressing the dynamics, processes and changes of deprivation over time.[56] Second, the fact that poverty is often defined according to a 'minimum' or 'subsistence' level of living makes it open to political manipulation. Depending on where the poverty line is placed, producers of statistics can adjust the number of people counted as poor according to different political objectives. Most importantly, however, it is the connection of poverty with class analysis, that has posed the biggest challenge to its use as a valid conceptual and empirical tool.[57]

Although there has been a development of a multidimensional approach within poverty and class analyses,[58] social exclusion theory is still regarded by its proponents as going

---

[54] For example, a number of studies aimed at reviewing the concept of social exclusion were commissioned by the UNDP/IILS project, which, taking on board researchers from all corners of the globe, covered less developed countries, and newly industrialising ones as well as economies in transition. Rodgers *et. al., op. cit.*

[55] J. Berghman, "The Measurement and Analysis of Social Exclusion in Europe: Two Paradoxes for Researchers", paper presented at the *Seminar on the Measurement and Analysis of Social Exclusion*, Bath, 1994, cited by Bhalla and Lapeyre, *op. cit.* p. 417.

[56] This was a point made by John Hills in his paper "Researching Social Exclusion", *op. cit.*

[57] Pahl, for example, wrote that in modern societies, 'class as a concept is ceasing to do any useful work for sociology.' "Is the Emperor Naked? Some Comments on the Adequacy of Sociological Theory in Urban and Regional Research", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 13, 1989, quoted in John H. Goldthorpe and Gordon Marshell, "The Promising Future of Class Analysis: A Response to Recent Critiques", *Sociology*, 26 (3), 1992. p. 381.

[58] See for example, Sen's idea of poverty are based on core factors of production and economic classes, but also deal with concepts of entitlement and capabilities. Amartya K. Sen, *Food and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981, quoted by Bhalla and Lapeyre, *op cit.* See also, A. K. Sen, *Inequality Reexamined*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992. In the words of Cohen, "Capability lies, causally, between income or primary goods or resources on the one hand and utility or welfare on the other." G. A. Cohen, "Amartya Sen's Unequal World - Review", *New Left Review*, 203, Janurary/February, 1994. p. 119. Likewise, Townsend's study of

beyond such theories in a number of useful ways. First, social exclusion theory is seen to address the dynamics of poverty and deprivation over time; second, it deals with the question of agency; third, it raises the question of which groups are doing the excluding; and finally, it is seen as a means of exploring the exact nature of what it is that certain individuals and groups are being excluded from.[59] The multi-layered phenomenon of social exclusion is seen as evidence of the need for a similarly all-pervasive concept. Aspects of social exclusion are not only seen as multiple, but as mutually reinforcing: anomalous exclusion from the 'mainstream', or the 'majority'. This includes political processes, the community, citizenship rights, coupled with the labour market and private property; unequal or deprived access to dominant modes of participation, production, consumption, and adequate public services; the denial of a self-ascribed identity, prohibiting minority groups from the right to articulate a distinct cultural identity and remain valued; in-built self-sustaining mechanisms of marginality, or self-marginalisation. This identifies status inferiority as undermining self-help.[60]

From this, causes of social exclusion have been identified and organised into the following inter-connecting categories: situation, socialisation, and structure. Situational factors include the contemporary characteristics of a given group in terms of the ways in which actual living conditions restrict access to vital resources, such as, time, money, and channels of communication. Social exclusion as a product of socialisation identifies a variety of different influences ranging from family and friends to wider society. These are perceived as shaping a given group's (cultural) identity and behaviour, which inhibits

---

poverty analysis at the international level recognised the way in which economic factors had repercussions for wider patterns of inequality. His study rested on ideas of relative deprivation, which he saw as comprising of two parts: material deprivation and social deprivation. Peter Townsend, *The International Analysis of Poverty*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1993. Duncan, *et al.*, in their eight country study of poverty dynamics, were also keen to address relative deprivation and to highlight extensive mobility among the poor. Gerg J. Duncan, B. Gustafsson *et al.*, "Poverty Dynamics in Eight Countries", *Journal of Population Economics*, 6, 1993.

[59] Rodgers *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, Duffy, *op. cit.*, Brown and Crompton (eds.), *op. cit.*

[60] Germani, *op. cit.* p. 18.

or enhances certain characteristics that are either inappropriate or conducive to dominant modes of social or political participation.[61] Finally, structural factors that contribute to social exclusion are identified in the political institutions of government and the mechanisms of decision making. It is argued that these are configured to deny certain groups such as women or minorities the same opportunities and benefits as accorded to other groups.

This multi-layered approach towards social exclusion opens the way for research to be carried out in a wide variety of contexts and otherwise disconnected disciplines. For example the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly on 28th January 1998 declared its support of the Council of Europe's project on Human Dignity and Social Exclusion and called for action in a number of policy areas. These included granting equal status to social and human rights, anti-poverty measures, literacy campaigns, improved housing policies, training programmes and provision of free medical care.[62]

2.7 The problems of social exclusion theory

However, a series of problems emerge with the use of such an approach. Firstly, the question that needs to be asked is what can we know about a society as a whole if we know that it is one characterised by social exclusion rather than by poverty? Presumably, we begin with the assumption that there is something to which people by right belong, but from which some are excluded. This feeds into the idea that we live in a European social democratic tradition of egalitarian citizenship where, "society is seen as a set of

---

[61] For example a survey was carried out in September 1984 throughout Kent, UK on all known women and children 'travellers', which revealed a positive correlation between the poor living conditions (where sites often lacked in basic facilities such as electricity and water supplies and rubbish disposal) and a higher than national average perinatal and infant mortality rate. Interestingly, their conclusions drew on factors of inadequate immunisation and preventative care especially among the more mobile travellers rather than on wider structural factors of inequality. This served subtly to place the blame on their particular chosen lifestyles. Jan Pahl and Michael Vaile, "Health and Health Care Among Travellers", *Journal of Social Policy*, 17 (2), 1988.

[62] Cathie Burton *Call to Combat Social Exclusion*, 1998 <http://www.coe.fr/cp/98/54aper cent2898per cent29.htm> (accessed November 1998)

collectives bound together by sets of mutual rights and obligations that are rooted in some moral order."[63] From this, comes the idea that society is undergoing a fragmentation of social cohesion, or of the moral order, which expressed in apparently neutral language describes how certain groups are finding themselves distanced from the centre of activity and are in situations of dependency.

The current use of social exclusion theory therefore tends to rest on the articulation of groups defined according to their degree of participation in different societal spheres, whether it be welfare, employment or education. Once 'excluded groups' have been identified, their plight is then described in terms of the denial of basic human rights, or as a breach of the social contract between the state and its citizens.[64] Despite claims otherwise it can therefore be seen to signal a subtle re-focus away from structural causes of poverty to the 'personal qualities' of the poor. Brown and Compton reflect this shift;

> *The dominant forms of social exclusion within most European countries are based not on political, or legal restrictions, limiting access to civil rights, education, or professional occupations, but on the outcome of ostensibly universal criteria of achievement, reflecting personal qualities, efforts and attributes.*[65]

Apathy is a common factor taken by social exclusion theorists to account for the apparent self-perpetuation of social exclusion. Most notably, there have been a number of studies carried out in recent years concerned with evaluating the level of participation in politics during the transition in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. These show that those on a low-income; those with a low level of education;[66] those who work

---

[63] N. Warner, "A Sad Song for Europe" *The Guardian*, 30 October, 1996.

[64] Walker, *op. cit.* p. 68.

[65] Brown and Crompton (eds.), *op. cit.*

[66] M. Wyman, S. White *et al.* for example, identify the following features of demobilisation in post-communist societies: low level of interest in politics (to which they ascribe education as a contributing factor); low income (which they see as connected with education and the level of satisfaction); and age (the young are seen as less likely than older to participate), "Public Opinion Parties and Voters in the December 1993 Russian Elections" *Europe-Asia Studies*, 47(4), 1994. p. 594.

in the informal sector;[67] and those who are traditionally associated with non-participation such as ethnic minorities and other 'socially excluded' groups are less likely than others to be politically mobilised.[68] Although they do not explicitly address the concept of social exclusion, the implications of these arguments have been taken on board by social exclusion theorists.

Following on from this initial question (of what we can know about a society if it is one defined as characterised by social exclusion) is a second set of issues that emerge with the use of such indicators. Firstly, the emphasis on their attributes rather than on the structures of inequality subtly betrays, as argued earlier, a sympathy with theories of underclass and marginality. Secondly, there are specific examples of national governments excluding certain groups from political participation, but these do not necessarily translate into a general process of social exclusion.[69] Finally, the question of apathy is itself problematic in that far from reflecting inactivity, non-voting, or non-participation it could represent a deliberate withdrawal from, if not resistance to, formal

---

[67] McAllister *et al.* draw parallels with the West in their identification of groups who appear, more than others, to lack political interest. Groups of comparative youth, with fewer educational attainments, and with a weak sense of political efficacy were identified as having a greater tendency than most to withdraw from conventional participation. Ian McAllister, Richard Rose and Stephen White, *How Russia Votes*, Chatham House Publishers, Chathem NJ, 1997. p. 604. Together with Rose they refer to activity in the informal sector as displaying disproportionate features that are non-conducive to conventional political participation. Devoid of legal prowess, 'uncivil entrepreneurs' are often denied access to resources to make capital investments necessary for the employment of large numbers of workers. This results in an underdevelopment of trade unions (reflected in plummeting trade union membership) Richard Rose, "Toward a Civil Economy", *Journal of Democracy,* 3(2) April, 1992. p. 16.

[68] Pacek with his discussion on macroeconomic factors offers more specific socio-economic explanations. He observes that "there has been a huge decline in voter participation with a concomitant rise in unemployment and fall in real salaries." Here, the stress is on the economic environment, rather than the groups themselves . Wade *et al.* in their discussion of the Polish 1991 elections, found similar evidence: turnout was suppressed in districts with lower personal incomes and higher unemployment. A. C. Pacek, "Macroeconomic conditions and Electoral Politics in East Central Europe", *American Journal of Political Science,* 38 (3), August, 1994. p. 730 and L.L. Wade, A.J. Groth and P. Lavelle, "Estimating Participation and Party Voting in Poland: The 1991 Parliamentary Elections", *East European Politics and Society,* 8 (1), Winter, 1994. p. 105.

[69] For example. in Bulgaria the Law on Political Parties (1991) prohibits the establishment of any political party on ethnic or religious grounds, which specifically excludes ethnic or religious minorities from representing themselves in the political arena. However, rather than being an aspect of a wider campaign to 'exclude' ethnic and religious groups in general, it represents a specific political agenda of preventing or at least attempting to limit possible Turkish irredentism.

political structures.[70] Ultimately, it seems that notions of social isolation and dislocation reinforce the negative associations of 'marginality' and 'exclusion', which form the backbone to popular policy.[71]

A third issue is how far, if at all, it is possible to measure the extent to which social exclusion theory does offer more than poverty and class analyses. Social exclusion is no less prone to political manipulation than measurements of poverty. Government agencies can favour some more positive aspects, such as education, at the expense of other more revealing indicators, such as income distribution, thus giving a distorted picture. Further to this, poverty as a concept need be no less dynamic than that of social exclusion as displayed in the growth in work on poverty that explore its multidimensional aspects (see footnote 57 in chapter 2). Furthermore, that social exclusion theorists continue to rely on traditional indicators of income and inequality as well as indicators of participation and satisfaction, reveals that social exclusion in itself is not measurably distinct from existing dimensions of poverty and deprivation.

A fourth issue lies with the popular use of social exclusion, which although can help identify specific examples of exclusion, is ultimately used as, above all, a generic conceptual tool. The Commission of the European Communities, for example, reported the different forms that social exclusion takes from one country to another, as if it were some ever-present force. Whereas in some countries social exclusion may manifest itself through problems of immigrants and refugees, the CEC argues that in others, it may be

---

[70] See for example, T. Cross and R.B. Slater, "The 1996 Elections – The Real Victor was Black Voter Apathy", *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 14, 1996.

[71] The reliance on ideas of isolation is reflected in the type of solutions sought i.e. they rest on the premise of finding ways to help adapt disadvantaged groups to external factors. For example, the basis of the European Social Fund (an agency of the European Union) rests on the following objectives: to regenerate designated areas affected by industrial decline; to combat long term unemployment; to assist young people into work, help those exposed to exclusion from the labour market, and promote equal opportunities for men and women; adapt the work force to industrial changes and to changes in production systems; and to facilitate development and structural adjustment of vulnerable rural areas. Corporate Enterprise Centre, *Eurofund - Regional and European Funding Support*, 1, 1998.

in terms of long term unemployment.[72] The use of passive language here is particularly interesting and reveals a neutrality that contradicts their claims elsewhere that social exclusion analysis rests on the question of agency. For example, Maclouf, in his discussion on social exclusion, sees it as a product of 'divergent processes', the exact nature of which he fails to explain:

> *People who may or may not resemble each other, similar or dissimilar groups, tend to gather together. But the inequality of "profit-sharing" of resources and goods with its ever-renewed dynamics produces new differentiations [and these dynamics] are cut across by divergent processes which tend towards integration or anomie, towards the social formation of a community or its disintegration.*[73]

Although the selling point of social exclusion theory is its equal consideration of sociological, political and economic factors, its reluctance to commit itself to any one strategy prevents it from articulating coherent policy responses. As a result, the multitude of inclusion packages that have since been adopted within both governmental and non-governmental spheres have had little impact on the wider structures of social inequality.

2.8 The responses

Social exclusion and its strategy of inclusion has increasingly informed international and national responses to mounting poverty and long-term unemployment in Western Europe.[74] The multidimensional analysis of exclusion, and the stress placed on encouraging participation for those excluded has invested the NGO sector with a specific role to play. The European Commission, the Council of Europe, the International Labour

---

[72] Commission of the European Communities (CEC), *Towards a Europe of Solidarity, Intensifying the Fight Against Social Exclusion, Fostering Integration*, COM (92) 542 final, 1992. p. 32.

[73] P. Maclouf "Etat et Cohésion" *Recherche et Prévisions*, 38, 1994, quoted in P. Strobel, "From Poverty to Exclusion: A Wage Earning Society or a Society of Human Rights?", *International Social Science Review*, 48 (2), 1996.

[74] At the European level, this is evident in the publication of such documents as: Duffy, *op. cit.*, and CEC *op. cit.* A series of conferences also reflect the same theme: Towards Solidarity in Europe, Lille May 1991; Building Blocks for a Social Europe, Rotterdam, November 1991; Combating Social Exclusion, Fostering Integration, Brussels, April 1992; Building Europe through Solidarity, Oporto, 1992. At the national level, the British government has not been alone in adopting the slogan of 'social exclusion' with its setting up of the Social Exclusion Unit.

Organisation and the United Nations Development Project, to name but a few, have all adopted social exclusion and the promotion of NGOs as central to their social policy agendas. While some have been more critical in their use of social exclusion than others, overall it signals a move away from policies concerned primarily with income redistribution towards a search for alternative and more acceptable ways of helping to include or re-integrate the poor. This less controversial and more subtle approach has earned it a wide appeal, from governments at the top down to social research institutes working at the ground level.

However, the UK government in 1994 raised doubts about the usefulness of the concept of social exclusion:

> *It is very doubtful whether the idea [...] of an integration plan for all the excluded is practical, not least because there is no generally accepted definition of social exclusion, let alone reliable evidence about the most effective way to tackle its causes.*[75]

Levitas in her critique of the use of the concept of 'social exclusion' in Britain goes one step further to argue that successful inclusion, if at all possible, would not in itself secure the answer to inequality,

> *The term social exclusion presumes that inclusion is beneficial, but it is salutary to remember that even if the unemployed, women, ethnic minorities and disabled people achieve equal opportunities in the labour market, this will still mean participation in a capitalist economy driven by profit, based upon exploitation and fundamentally divided by class.*[76]

The evasion of class and power as implicit to ideas of inclusion seems to pose the most significant problem. Social exclusion theorists tend to emphasise macroeconomic growth, incentives and individual skill development in their search for solutions, i.e. the

---

[75] Commission of the European Communities, *European Social Policy - A Way Forward for the Union*, Vols 1 and 2, White Paper, COM (95) 94 final. p. 268

[76] Levitas, *op. cit.* pp. 187-188.

non-educated can be educated, the isolated can be encouraged to re-integrate and the insecure can be given new confidence. Although for many of those who use the social exclusion concept the need for social democratic redistribution within the existing socio-economic order is seen as an intrinsic part of this process of inclusion, the implication remains that, by focusing on equipping the excluded, those in positions of power go unchallenged.

The strategies of inclusion that have emerged from this have fed on ideas of community development and urban regeneration. Although local initiatives are seen as an important source for self-help and increased employability, social exclusion theory suggests a more integrated approach that considers 'inclusion' at all levels of society. For example, the action programme by the European Commission for the period 1995-1997 rested on the following five fields of action: promoting integration into working life; improving vocational training; preventing redundancies; promoting the creation of new jobs; and helping to achieve solidarity in vulnerable districts and among the most vulnerable groups.[77] In practice, however, as pointed out by Kleinman in his critique of the British government's Social Exclusion Unit, inclusion strategies tend to be restricted to localised initiatives.[78]

Western Governments, with their heightened concerns over welfare provision, have been keen to explore new ways of refining the selection, or targeting process. Definitions of who is and who is not eligible have been tightened in recent years in order to make the welfare system more cost-effective. Resting on a distinction between 'deserving' and 'non-deserving' poor, the displacement of universal welfare provision with the 'social safety net' has served subtly to deny certain groups their right to social protection.

---

[77] European Commission, "Big Bosses Act Against Exclusion", *Social Europe Magazine,* 1, September, 1995.
[78] Kleinman, *op. cit.*

Concepts of citizenship have been central to this, where social obligations as well as social rights have been used to prioritise the interests of certain groups at the expense of others. Masked by the rhetoric of anti-exclusion policy responses, however, which claim to counteract the "tearing of the social fabric", this dismantling of universal welfare has passed by with little political obstruction.[79]

Partly dictated by economic collapse and partly by the prescriptions implicit in the World Bank and IMF 'technical assistance', concerns over welfare spending and with finding ways to promote alternative sources of social security have also underpinned government policy in Eastern Europe since 1989.[80] The emphasis placed by post-communist governments on a new system of minimum social safety nets has been actively encouraged by Western advisors who, especially in the early stages of reform and in the light of the rise of mass poverty, were quick to promote the need for more 'efficient' methods for defining and measuring 'the most vulnerable' groups in order to enhance targeting and so reduce pressure on welfare spending. The essence of this agenda is displayed in the advice offered by Wapenhaus in 1990 regarding reform in Eastern Europe:

> *Social benefits should be financially affordable and leave economic incentives undistorted, while providing adequate support and protection to the most vulnerable population groups. Tasks in this area include the need to scale back and target the system of pervasive consumer subsidies, reform health and education services, develop an efficient housing system that allows for labor mobility, provide unemployment compensation, and establish social security systems compatible with the need for labor mobility in a market economy.*[81]

---

[79] Gore, *op. cit.* p. 2. For example the *Observatory on National Policies to Combat Social Exclusion* has taken a social rights approach where its 1994 official document talks specifically of rights in terms of housing, education etc. Also the CEC document argues that social exclusion stems from "inadequacies or weaknesses in the services offered and policies pursued in these various policy areas", *op. cit.* 1992. p. 8.

[80] The World Bank defined 'technical assistance' as "any activity that enhances human and institutional capabilities through the transfer, adaptation, and use of knowledge, skills and technology". Laura Wallace, "Reshaping Technical Assistance", *Finance and Development*, 27 (4), December 1990.

[81] Willi Wapenhans (the then Vice President of the World Bank's Europe, Middle East and North Africa Region), "The Challenge of Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe", *Finance and Development*, 27 (4), December, 1990. p. 4.

Despite there being an overall consensus on state withdrawal in both Western and Eastern Europe, strategies of inclusion differ from one context to another, according to whether the emphasis is placed on the first, second or third sectors. Silver's model of social exclusion, in which she outlines three ideological paradigms: solidarity (republicanism); specialisation (liberalism); and monopoly (social democracy) presents a framework for analysing specific political traditions that have informed different policy responses of inclusion.[82] In the republican context we might expect that social exclusion will manifest itself in the breaking of social bonds between the individual and society, where society in the Rousseau sense is taken as some external, moral and normative order. In this scenario integration is the inverse of exclusion and insertion is the process by which to attain it. The liberal model implies that exclusion is a consequence of specialisation whereby group boundaries impede on individual freedom to participate in social exchanges. Exclusion in this sense is a form of discrimination and in order for this to be challenged market competition needs to be nurtured and individual rights protected. Finally, in the social democratic sense, the excluded are simultaneously outsiders and dominated in that the interplay of class, status and power serve the interests of the included. The remedy in this case is the extension of citizenship to enable equal participation.

2.9 The NGO strategy in Eastern Europe

Although these various responses have slightly different emphases, they are all rooted in some concept of active citizenship. In Eastern Europe this is a particularly salient issue, where processes of political and economic 'transition' appear to be shaping new models of citizenship. Social exclusion theorists see much potential in this for promoting the interests of the 'excluded'. Solutions to problems of exclusion in Eastern Europe are

[82] Hilary Silver, "Social Exclusion and Social Solidarity: Three Paradigms", *International Labour Review*, 133, (5-6), 1995.

sought not only by advocates of the poor through the extension of rights to include vulnerable groups, such as ethnic minorities or street children, but also through the building of an inclusive NGO sector.[83]

The emphasis on the role of NGOs while praised for its inclusionary potential is also part of the more general shift away from universal state welfare. Even in the very early stages of reform it was possible to identify in World Bank and IMF programmes a keen support for the building of an NGO sector. It was believed that NGOs would not only offer a proactive bottom-up framework, but also offer an alternative means of distributing aid more fairly to those most severely in need.[84]

However, in finding ways to limit the 'social costs' of the 'transition', and to encourage the development of civil society, policy makers in the West have invested the newly emerging NGO sector in Eastern Europe with a huge and difficult task. Most significant, however, as discussed later in chapter 5, has been the emphasis placed on its ability to 'include' excluded groups. Its role at the ground level has earned it a reputation of being an appropriate means of seeking out 'the needy' and for enabling their active participation through community development. With its emphasis on bottom-up initiatives and on programmes of self-help the NGO sector has provided the ideal policy tool for social exclusion theorists.

Education, in particular, has often been seen as the cornerstone to both NGO and government anti-exclusion policy. Numerous policies have emerged that are aimed at 'limiting social exclusion' through the inclusion of greater numbers of young people into

---

[83] Council of Europe, *Street Children - Study Group on Street Children*, Steering Committee on Social Policy, Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1994.

[84] See for example, Aubrey Williams, "A Growing Role for NGOs in Development", *Finance and Development, op. cit.*; World Bank, *How the World Bank Works With Nongovernmental Organisations*, IBRD,WB, Washington D.C., 1990.

the schooling system. For example, the Council of Europe's Human Dignity and Social Exclusion Project (HDSE) organised a conference in Athens in October 1997 which was entirely dedicated to this very subject. Its thrust was to bring together education experts, government officials and NGO representatives to explore how education can help prevent social exclusion in Europe. It discussed various strategies such as: targeting children at risk of exclusion; the use of formal and informal education to fight exclusion; and the help of NGOs.[85] The strategy of NGOs was also central to a conference organised by the Department of Health, Social Welfare and Sports of the Netherlands, entitled "The Social Exclusion of Sinti, Rom and Cales (Gypsies): Causes and Cures". The aim of the conference was "to analyse causes, processes and patterns of the social exclusion of gypsies [sic], and to define preventative and curative inclusionary approaches that can be translated into effective policies."[86] The activities of NGOs and the role of multilateral organisation were taken as important sites for inclusion and specialists were invited from this field to participate.

Implicit in these policy responses is that inclusion represents the positive alternative to exclusion. Some exclusion theorists recognise the dangers of such a crude approach, and stress that there are many levels of integration that can be pursued. For example, those groups who rely on a particular livelihood outside the labour market may experience new levels of exclusion if included into formal employment. Likewise, rural-urban migrants may be integrated into the process of industrial development but in the process lose

---

[85] Council of Europe, *Education and Social Exclusion,* 1997 <http.//www.coe.fr/cp/97/562aper cent2897per cent29.htm> (accessed November 1998). See also Cathie Burton, *Conference Draws Up Blueprint For Action Against Social Exclusion*, 1998 <http://www.coe.fr/cp/98365aper cent2898per cent29.htm> (accessed November 1998). This gives an account of a conference entitled "Conference on Human Dignity and Social Exclusion", organised by the Council of Europe, which took place in Helsinki on 20 May 1998. The key themes addressed were education, health, social protection and housing.

[86] Conference programme provided by Pieter Hovens, Department of Health, Social Welfare and Sports, the Netherlands. The conference took place on 14-16 December 1998 and was co-organised with the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme of UNESCO.

aspects of social protection and community support networks.[87] The other factor often left out by social exclusion analysis and strategies of inclusion is the question of resistance on the part of those groups defined as 'excluded'.

2.10 The hidden dimension.

This view of society as one defined by social exclusion rather than by poverty alone rests on ideas of isolation or dislocation and as demonstrated in the previous section on strategies of integration or reintegration. Such an approach while recognising the different degrees of participation that characterise all societies, however, runs the risk of leaving out an important dimension; that is the one of resistance. Questions of resistance are nothing new and feed into wider debates triggered during the 1960s and 1970s by both 'social historians' who acknowledged the need to recognise perspectives from below as well as from above, and 'post modernists' who, in their rejection of material objectivity, were interested in promoting as equal the 'histories' of subordinated groups.

This emerging trend of examining 'history from below' opened up possibilities for a more sympathetic approach towards oppressed groups in the analysis of their contribution to social structures and processes.[88] By re-focusing the discussion onto the oppressed, rather than the oppressors, scholars concerned with 'reclaiming the subject' hoped to reveal some of the fundamental problems attached to liberal claims that we as citizens have equal stakes in society's structures and its shared culture.

The recognition of this hidden dimension gave rise to a number of interesting possibilities. One of the main implications of this trend lay with the post-modern

---

[87] Rodgers *et. al., op. cit.* p. 52.

[88] Alex Callinicos, "Marxism and the Crisis in Social History." In John Rees (ed.), *Essays on Historical Materialism*, Bookmarks, London, 1998.

approach and its focus on the subjective histories of the oppressed. Rather than placing their analyses within the wider context, their identification of 'subjective histories' served to dissolve power of all agency. The problems of disregarding empirical realities and the central relevance of 'external' factors is illustrated most explicitly in the work of Mitchell.[89] In his personification of power, he unwittingly, therefore, reveals how his own discussion strips power and domination of all meaning. Thus, "*domination works through actually constructing a seemingly dualistic world*"; "*power...seeks to extend itself and work more economically by producing effects that are cultural or ideological*"; "*power relations continue to acquire their hold over peasants' lives*"; "*the fixed, self-reproducing power..*"; and "*power inserts itself*" [90]. In all of these examples, there is no clear indication of who, or what is responsible for this 'power', other than itself.

Other scholars interested in the experiences of oppressed groups, however, have not necessarily fallen into this trap of dissolving power of all agency. One such scholar is James C. Scott. The bulk of his work has been concerned with the idea that the ideological superstructure of class society is one reproduced through a power struggle between the dominators and the subordinated acted out through an interplay of public and hidden discourses. He defines the hidden transcript as "a host of practices devised to exercise [..] rights in clandestine ways", acted out by the oppressed and shielded by their public transcript of compliance.[91] "The practice of domination", he argues, "*creates* the hidden transcript" whereby both transcripts come to represent realms of power and interest.[92] Labelled as the "infrapolitics of the powerless", Scott injects the discourse of a hidden transcript with subversive tools for ideological resistance.[93]

---

[89] Timothy Mitchell, "Everyday Metaphors of Power", *Theory and Society*, 19, 1990.
[90] *Ibid.* pp. 547-571.
[91] James C. Scott, Weapons of the Weak, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1985. p. 189.
[92] *Ibid.* p. 27.
[93] *Ibid.* p. 183.

This reading of resistance does carry with it a host of problems as well as important insights, which are discussed in section 4 of chapter 7. However, for now let it be said that in contrast to post-modern interpretations of a 'subjective histories' and, importantly to the social exclusion reading of 'isolated' groups, Scott's theory of 'hidden resistance' opens up for debate possibilities of rational response on the part of those groups dismissed as 'excluded', 'isolated', 'backward' or 'deviant'. This 'missing dimension' to social exclusion theory enhances rather than constrains its use, in that it can offer to policy makers a more acceptable and convenient conceptual tool to work with. However, for many the benefits to social exclusion are observed not so much in what it lacks, but in what it gains when compared to the apparent limitations of poverty based analysis.

2.11 Conclusion

The concept of social exclusion has served an important function insofar as it has incorporated into mainstream agendas groups that have been traditionally restricted to specialist analysis. Ideologically, it has provided an acceptable platform from which many governments are willing to embark on policies aimed at tackling social inequalities, an approach that otherwise would have involved taking some responsibility. At the same time, the rapidity with which social exclusion has entered popular political discourse, coupled with a growing concern over welfare limits, has indicated the need for a closer examination.

In light of the identification of a possible 'hidden dimension', namely that of 'hidden resistance', this chapter has raised a number of interesting theoretical questions about social exclusion theory and the policy implications of 'inclusion'. Ultimately, the policy-constructed concept of social exclusion, whereby researchers in the field seem to be always trying to catch up with, rather than inform, policy agendas has led to the situation

in which everyone is talking about social exclusion yet still struggling to define it.[94] One of the consequences of this has been that various holes have emerged within the social exclusion argument. Ultimately the question that needs to be asked is how far it is possible to talk of socially excluded groups without addressing the structural causes of inequality and the nature of conflict that shapes societal relations.

Although social exclusion theory is seen by some within the field as necessary for the radical re-working of poverty and deprivation analyses, social exclusion theorists (including those who claim to take a more critical view of governmental policy) still run the risk of simply 'reinventing the wheel', or re-labelling old problems. Rather than questioning existing assumptions about poverty and distribution, social exclusion theorists continue to reinforce assumptions that underpin more controversial concepts of underclass, marginality and culture of poverty.[95]

Ultimately the concept of social exclusion remains imprecise and difficult to prove empirically. Whereas some use social exclusion to describe behaviour, others use it to explain structural elements of inequality. It is not clear whether the 'underclass', or the 'socially excluded' describe all poor, or sub-groups of the poor. Underpinning the use of social exclusion theory, however, is the idea that there are social groups who not only fall outside of mainstream society, but, who fall *behind* the rest of society. This can serve to fix the existence of poverty groups as both inevitable and as evidence of their own backwardness. As addressed in chapter 4, the logical next stage of such a theory can be then to attach inherent attributes to poverty groups such as race or ethnicity.

---

[94] This particularly came across in the conference discussed above, *Social Exclusion and the City*, where each speaker felt obliged to explain first what they meant by social exclusion.

[95] Spicker, *op. cit.*

The ambiguous implications that arise from a straightforward view of exclusion/inclusion are explored in closer detail in the following chapters. In particular, chapter 3 addresses the transition as a period in which existing social inequalities under Communist society have since been heightened, especially for ethnic groups such as Gypsies. While raising questions about the nature of Communist society, latent inequalities have also encouraged a concern over the emergence of 'new' poverty groups and in particular of growing 'social exclusion'.

CHAPTER 3

THE TRANSITION AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the nature of social inequality during the 'transition' in Eastern Europe and the extent to which the theory of social exclusion presents a useful framework for analysing and dealing with these trends. The continuing economic crises in the former Communist countries, coupled with signs of global recession, have dampened the euphoria of 'revolution' in Eastern Europe and weakened claims about the 'end of history' in the West. Social exclusion theory represents one major attempt on the part of policy makers to deal with this bleak situation.

The increasingly high levels of poverty in the 'transition' countries are seen to represent 'new' dimensions of social exclusion, defined overtly as a consequence of rapid 'modernisation', in this case market reform, and implicitly a product of cultural pathologies on the part of certain 'social groups'. Despite an overall concern among policy makers over the high social costs of the transition, this approach has not always led to a fundamental questioning of the market reforms, nor to a useful re-evaluation of existing assumptions about the nature of 'Communist' society. The limited approach of social exclusion is further undermined by the lack of available reliable data.

This chapter explores the nature of Communist society before 1989, in terms of the gap that existed between the rhetoric of socialism and economic growth and the reality of social inequality and economic stagnation. The long term economic crisis that precipitated regime change then provides the basis for a discussion on the transition and the different types of social inequality that have evolved: falling living standards; stretching differentiation between social groups; and the visible existence of 'poverty groups.' Social exclusion theory will be explored in particular reference to the latter aspect of social inequality, which forms the final part of this discussion.

3.2 Communist society and social inequality

The Soviet type economy was one that officially ran on the principles of the nationalisation of the means of production, economic central planning, centralised political power, cultural/national homogenisation and social equality. The extent to which these principles remained intact or indeed were ever realised has been the subject of much research. The questions of cultural homogenisation and social equality have been particularly salient issues given the nationality based break up of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia and the rapidity with which extreme patterns of social inequality have emerged more generally since the collapse of the Communist regimes.

Centrally controlled by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the Soviet empire spanned a vast geographical area covering large parts of both Europe and Asia. Historically, Eastern Europe formed a cultural as well as geographical transitional zone between the Russian tradition of the concentration of power and the Western tradition of the division of power.[1] However, after World War II a ruthless agenda of 'Sovietisation' on the part of the CPSU led to Eastern Europe being situated under the cloak of Russian Communist rule. Although the historical and political paths of these East Central European countries did vary under Communism, they were initially subject to heavily centralised policies administered from Russia through their respective Communist governments. Consequently, the Soviet framework of economic, political, and social policy was, to varying degrees, a feature common to all the countries of Eastern Europe.[2]

However, it is important to note the differences that did exist between these countries, in terms of geography, population, and economic development. Tables 3.1-3.3 highlight some of these differences and help place into context the situation of Bulgaria during Communism.

---

[1] George Schöplin, *Politics in Eastern Europe*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1993.

[2] With the exception of Albania and Yugoslavia who took distinctively different paths.

Table 3.1. Basic characteristics of Eastern Europe.

	Total population (million)	Area (sq.km) Density (inhab. km sq)	Urban/ Rural %	Main ethnic minorities	Main Religions
Czecho-slovakia	15,656	127,900 123	75/25	Poles, Germans, Gypsies, Hungarians.	Catholic 50% Protestant 20%
Poland	38,600	312, 683 123	60/40	Ukrainians and Belorussians. [3]	Catholic 95%
Hungary	10,277	93,030 110	60/40	Germans, Slovaks, South Slavs, Gypsies, Romanians.	Catholic 67% Hungarian Reformed 22%
GDR	16,648	108,333 154	77/23	Sorbs, Russians.	Protestant 47%
Romania	22,680	237,500 96	51/49	Gypsies, Hungarians.	E.Orthodox 70% Catholic 10%
Bulgaria	9,010	110,994 81	66/34	Turks, Gypsies, Pomaks, Vlachs.	E.Orthodox 85% Muslim 10%
Albania	3,429	28,750 119	41/59	Greeks, Vlachs, Gypsies, Macedonians.	Sunni Muslim 70%*
Yugo-slavia (1990)	23,841	98, 610 (sq. miles)	33/67	Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins, Albanians, Macedonians.	E.Orthodox 50% Catholic 30% Muslim 9%

Between 1967-1990, Albania was constitutionally atheist and all religion banned.

Compared with countries such as Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic and Slovakia), Hungary, Poland, and the German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria is quite distinct. Firstly, Bulgaria is situated in the Balkans and like parts of Romania and the former Yugoslavia, it has had the particular historical experience of having lived under the Ottoman Empire. Secondly, Bulgaria has within its borders the largest proportion of Turkish and Gypsy populations, having implications for religion and language. Although it is predominantly an Christian Eastern Orthodox country it also has a substantial Muslim component. Finally, in terms of economic development during the Communist

[3] Post-war minorities in Poland amounted to no more than 1.5%

period Bulgaria appeared to sustain state directed development for longer, albeit from a lower level.

Tables 3.2 and 3.3 show that overall national income and industrial output in Bulgaria between 1985-1989, and 1970-1990 respectively, grew at a faster rate than the more advanced countries of Hungary and GDR. Bulgaria was a more agrarian based society, which certainly provides one major explanation for the relative growth in output in the industrial sector. In terms of its agricultural output, however, the rate of growth was not as high as with other countries. This weakness has proved fatal for post-1989 economic development. During the 'transition' Bulgaria has fallen behind the more prosperous 'front-runner' countries and is now generally considered to be one of the 'laggards' of reform, having only just recently embarked on tentative measures of privatisation.

Table 3.2 Growth of produced national income at constant prices 1980-1989 (1980=100)

	1980	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1988**	**1989**
Czechoslovakia	100	109	111	114	117	117
Poland	100	96	101	103	108	108
Hungary	100	107	108	112	111	110
Romania	100	124	133	140	144	133
Bulgaria	100	120	126	133	136	135

Source: Eurostat, Country Reports, 1991.

Table 3.3 Gross industrial and agricultural output for selected countries at constant prices 1970-1990 (1970=100)

	1970	**1975**	**1980**	**1985**	**1987**	**1988**	**1989**	**1990**
Hungary	100	136.6 (I)	161.0	176.8	187.1	187.1	185.2	-
		125.5 (A)	141.2	146.2	146.8	153.1	151.1	141.3
GDR	100	136.1	173.8	206.8	219.0	225.9	231.1	-
		122.4	131.0	146.7	146.3	143.2	145.5	-
Romania	100	184.0	289.0	351.5	384.3	398.1	389.7	-
		137.0	165.0	197.5	170.1	179.8	170.1	165.0
Bulgaria	100	155	208.9	260.7	281.8	296.0	302.1	-
		115.5	120.9	117.4	124.5	124.7	125.2	117.7

Source: Comecon, 1991.

In the countries of Eastern Europe a vertically organised network of powerful, centralised bureaucracies underpinned all the respective Communist Party policy agendas.[4] Industrial production, for example, was planned not as an outcome of free enterprise, but of bureaucratic control. At its peak, central planning through a national plan determined what should be produced, what methods should be used and what incomes should be received in every republic, region, province, district and state farm.[5] The emphasis on extensive rather than intensive growth and the prioritisation of heavy industry ensured quick but short lived economic growth. Although pre-war figures show that between 1913 and 1940 industrial output in the Soviet Union increased fourfold, the post-war situation across Eastern Europe was markedly different.[6] Even according to official figures at the time, which in themselves were questionable, it was possible to observe that the performance of the East European economies between the 1950s and 1980s seemed to be on the decline (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4 Decline in Performance of the Comecon Bloc according to pre-1989 Official data and Concepts 1951-1985 (%)

	1951-55	1956-60	1961-65	1966-70	1971-75	1976-80	1981-85
National Income	10.8	8.5	6.0	7.4	6.4	4.1	3.0
Industrial Production	15.6	10.1	8.3	8.3	7.9	4.7	3.4
Agricultural Production	4.0	4.8	2.1	3.7	1.6	1.0	2.1

Source: Statisticheskii ezhegodnik stran - chienov soveta ekonomicheskoi vzaimopomoshchi, Moscow, 1989.[7]

The tendency of enterprises to hoard their produce, and the state's refusal to support production outside of its designated targets has led many to argue that the Soviet economy was one defined by shortage.[8] The shortage economy and chronic overstaffing

[4] Moshe Lewin, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon: An Historical Interpretation*, Radius, London, 1989, p. 139.

[5] There was degree of give and take between agencies and factories, however, and a certain degree of influence could be exerted on the setting of targets and prices. *Ibid.* p. 137.

[6] W. W. Rostow, *The Dynamics of Soviet Society*, Mentor, New York, 1963. p. 85.

[7] Cited in M. Haynes and R. Husan, "The State and Market in the Transition Economies: Critical Remarks in the Light of Past History and Current Experience", *Journal of European Economic History*, 27 (3), Winter, 1999. p. 630.

[8] Kornai argues that the 'constant reproduction of shortage' is caused by the fact that there is no *self-imposed* limit to the demand for investment resources, thus leading to hoarding which fuels shortages further. János Kornai, *A hiány*, Közgazdasági es Jogi, 2nd edition, 1982, cited by Schöplin, *op. cit.* p. 79.

concealed unemployment to a large extent, and queuing and corruption became features of everyday life throughout the Soviet bloc. This manifested itself most visibly in the emergence of a second economy. This unofficial economy served to fill many of the gaps left by the shortage economy and also helped alleviate some of the abundant waste by selling and buying excess equipment and goods. As well as serving this economic function, participation in the unofficial second economy placed an extra burden on many workers already employed in official sectors.[9]

3.3 Social Policy during Communism

Social policy under the Communist regime claimed to offer a measure against social risks. However, welfare policies, like economic ones, were determined and administered from the centre. This meant that decisions on welfare provision were largely inspired by political considerations rather than real societal needs dictated by a concern for enhancing the stock of 'human capital'. The principles of the Soviet welfare state consisted of heavily subsidised food and rent, full employment, relatively high wages of workers (as percentage of the average) and the provision of free or cheap health and education services.[10] As in the West, however, this impressive facade of equal opportunity served to shield many of its intrinsic limitations.[11]

Many citizens experienced a low income, hidden unemployment, a lack of available goods, and unequal access to certain benefits and privileges. With economic stagnation this situation worsened. In the latter decades of the Soviet regime a number of unofficial studies were carried out in the USSR that outlined features of poverty and declining living conditions for different sectors of the population.[12] In the West, also at this time, a

---

[9] Many argue that its features of barter, economic initiative and so forth were necessary for survival under Communism and helped nurture entrepreneurial skills, vital for economic survival during the current period of market reform Others go further to argue that the origins of the 'Soviet Mafia' can be found in this second economy. See, for example, Caroline Humphrey, "Introduction", *Cambridge Anthropology*, 18 (2), 1995.

[10] Bob Deacon, "Developments in East European Social Policy", in C. Jones (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Welfare State in Europe*, Routledge, London, 1993.

[11] Medvedev, for example, observed that in the Soviet Union in the mid 1970s, millions of people were still experiencing material hardship, receiving pay below the minimum wage, and living in poor and overcrowded housing conditions, cited in V. George and N. Manning, *Socialism, Social Welfare and the Soviet Union*, Routledge, London, 1980. p. 23.

[12] For example, various *Samizdats* were distributed within the USSR entitled, "Poverty and Working Conditions in Siberia", "Poverty and the Large Family", "Problems Faced by Single Parents", cited in Mervyn Matthews, *Poverty in*

series of studies were published that explored class society and persistent inequality in the countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.[13] These identified three key patterns of social inequality during the Soviet regime in both the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe: A gradual decline in living standards for the population as a whole; fixed differentials between the ruling 'elite' and the masses and also between men and women, and different social classes; and the existence of poverty groups, such as the unemployed and the elderly.

Many studies have tended to focus on the general low living standard experienced by the majority of the population. Matthews, for example, tracked the average annual GNP per capita growth rates across Eastern Europe between 1965 and 1981 in order to show that on average growth began to ease in the late seventies (see Table 3.5). This, he argued, showed that the earlier decline of poverty that had previously characterised the Soviet regime was now being reversed. For example, in the Soviet Union food costs absorbed on average nearly two-thirds of the total family budget. Although a typical indicator of poverty in the West in the Soviet context it also reflected the very low cost of housing coupled with the provision of free healthcare and education.[14] On the other hand, however, although a minimum wage was in place, it was often rendered meaningless by severe shortages or inflation. In Bulgaria, for example, the minimum wage offered little protection against poverty, where in 1970 it was a modest 52.6 per cent of the average wage, and by 1980 had sunk to 46.6 per cent.[15]

---

the Soviet Union - The Life-Styles of the Under Privileged in Recent Years, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986. pp. 180-202.

[13] See for example, P. Kende and Z. Strmicka, *Equality and Inequality in Eastern Europe,* Berg, Leamington Spa, 1987; David Lane, *The End of Social Inequality? - Class, Status and Power Under State Socialism,* George Allen and Unwin, London, 1982; Malcolm Hamilton and Maria Hirszowicz, *Class and Inequality in Pre-Industrial, Capitalist and Communist Societies*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1987; Mervyn Matthews, *Poverty in the Soviet Union, op. cit.*, 1986; Mervyn Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union - A Study of Elite Lifestyles under Communism*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1978; W. Wesolowski, "The Notions of Strata and Class in Socialist Society." In Andre Beteille (ed.), *Inequality,* Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1969.

[14] Matthews, *op. cit.* 1986. p. 177

[15] *Ibid.* p. 158.

Table 3.5 Average annual GNP per capita growth rates 1965-1981 (at constant prices, %)

	1965-70	1970-75	1975-80	1981
GDR	3.2	3.8	2.5	2.4
Czechoslovakia	3.2	2.7	1.3	0.1
Hungary	2.7	3.0	2.0	0.6
Poland	3.0	5.7	-0.1	-7.5
Romania	3.2	5.2	3.0	0.3
Bulgaria	4.0	3.9	0.9	2.8

Source: T.P. Alton et al.[16]

3.4 Patterns of social inequality during Communism

It was often the case that the quality of state services remained poor and in general fell short of securing a good standard of living for the wider population. Further to this, the comprehensive welfare system was not so universal in practice as official data claimed it to be. It was marred by inefficiency and privilege. In Russia, a not untypical example, Matthews revealed large differentials between the ruling 'elite' and the masses. He also addressed aspects of poverty for different occupational groups, taking into account factors such as gender and age. He argues that although low skilled manual and service workers received the lowest wages and transfers this did not guarantee an above-average income for white collar workers. Those working in health, culture and agriculture were just as likely as unskilled manual workers to find themselves among the poor.[17] Table 3.6 shows that the measure of income inequality in Eastern Europe in the 1980s according to their Gini Coefficients was not quite so removed from similar measures in the West. However, as with all data, but especially in this context, figures on income inequality are not always entirely accurate in that monetary income is only part of total economic resources, where incomes in kind, services supplied free of charge and various exchanges also play an important role.

[16] Cited in Matthews, *Poverty in the Soviet Union*, *op. cit.* p. 157. Although GNP per capita does not give a an indication of inequality in income distribution, Matthews uses it to examine overall patterns of deprivation.

[17] *Ibid;* Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union*, *op. cit.*

Table 3.6 Distribution of Income 1985-1989*

	Gini Coefficient
Czechoslovakia	20.1
Hungary	24.4
Poland	26.8
USSR	28.9
United Kingdom	29.7

* *The figures refer to the distribution of individuals by per capita family income.*

Source: A. Atkinson and J. Micklewright (1991). [18]

Taking this into account, Hamilton and Hirszowicz argued that in a 'shortage' economy it was not so much differential income that divided social groups, but more the unequal distribution of consumer goods and privileges.[19] They argued that access to scarce products was one of the major components in standards of living under Communism. Lane noted that the distribution of income in industry was becoming more equal, therefore, like Hamilton and Hirszowicz, he also stressed the importance of analysing the unequal distribution of payment received in kind or transfers.[20] Whether it be in terms of pensions, allowances, education, housing subsidy or medical care, social security transfers were generally linked with wage income. The allocation of transfers through the work place meant that those groups who did not work for the state, such as rural peasantry, widows, and the disabled did not receive social provisions of education or health care. Also, lower-paid workers were less likely to receive the same level of pension, for example, as more well paid workers.[21]

More so in the Soviet Union than in Eastern Europe, a significant gap existed between rural/urban incomes in terms of both money income and transfers where the peasantry were considerably worse-off than city dwellers. Collectivisation had obliged peasants to work under harsh administrative regimes which kept prices and their incomes low. Under Communism peasants' incomes in the Soviet Union were less than two thirds of the

---

[18] Cited in Alastair McAuley, "Economic Justice in Eastern Europe." In Stein Ringen and Claire Wallace (eds.), *Societies in Transition -East Central Europe Today*, Vol. 1. Avebury, Aldershot, 1994. p. 32, Table 2.

[19] Access to such goods also meant the possibility of re-selling them at free-market prices. Hamilton and Hirszowicz, *op. cit.* pp. 240-241.

[20] D. Lane, *op. cit.*

[21] *Ibid.* p. 59.

country's average income and half that earned by urban dwellers.[22] Access to social security was also a divisive factor for this sector of society. According to official policy, peasants were not defined as eligible for free health care and so forth until the late sixties and early seventies. Even then, transfers formed less than 10 per cent of their income compared to 20 per cent for state employees.[23]

Gender has also been identified as a key indicator of social inequality under Communism. Formal participation rates for women in paid full time employment in the Soviet regimes were considerably higher than in the West.[24] This was underpinned by the principle of equal wages for women and men. In practice, however, women were more likely than men to be employed in lower-paid branches of the economy and to experience interruptions in career patterns.[25] Furthermore, the labelling of 'women's work' was still very much prevalent, such as the caring professions, domestic, retail trade and textiles. This was reinforced by the expectation that women were still responsible for housework and child care, forming the notorious double burden.[26] The reinforcement of occupational segregation was therefore still in practice, and women were often barred from promotion and the first to be dismissed.[27] As a result, women were less represented among senior positions.[28]

The existence of poverty groups, such as the unemployed, and the elderly have also been observed as a feature of Communist society. Matthews, for example, discusses the effect of low or no pensions in the Soviet Union on the level of poverty for the elderly. One of the key responses to this was for retired pensioners to find work elsewhere.[29] However the extent to which this alleviated poverty was not clear cut. According to Matthews, the

---

[22] M. I. Goldman, *USSR in Crisis: The Failure of the Economic System*, W.W. Norton, New York, 1983. p. 76.

[23] *Ibid.* p. 160; D. Lane, *op. cit.* p. 56.

[24] In the Soviet Union, for example, the formal participation of women was in excess of 80 per cent compared to less than 50 per cent in countries like Britain and Germany. Lane, *op. cit.* p. 76.

[25] Matthews, 1986, *op. cit.*

[26] This is sometimes referred to as the 'triple burden', if we also consider their role in consumption - it was mainly the women who did the queuing and buying.

[27] Barbara Einhorn, *Cinderella Goes to Market,* Verso, London, 1993. p. 24.

[28] E.g. Although the percentage of women in the teaching profession in the Soviet Union was very high (70 per cent), only 32 per cent of the heads of middle schools were women. Lane, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

[29] Matthews, *op. cit.* 1986. pp. 48-51.

unemployed were also prone to high levels of poverty. Although officially full employment had been achieved and unemployment benefit was stopped, unemployment remained a reality for many. The most likely types of unemployment were job-changing; seasonal unemployment; and pockets of long term unemployed in underdeveloped small towns.[30] Finally, family size was also a factor associated with poverty. In Hungary, Kemeny observed that in 1968 a fifth of the population were 'poor' and one-tenth 'very poor'. In 1973, he examined family types and concluded that of families with four or more children, 83 per cent were 'poor' and 63 per cent 'very poor'.[31]

Various theories have emerged that attempt to explain social inequality and the existence of poverty during Communism. These generally fall into the following camps: class analysis, elite theory, and the role of the centralised party bureaucracy. Class analysts rest on the idea that what existed during the Soviet regime was not anything that resembled Marx's view of Communism, but instead a form of state capitalism.[32] Elite theorists focus on the system of privilege and the reproduction of wealth for an elite as embodied in the 'nomenklatura'.[33] Finally, others argue that the cause of such inequality, or differential 'life chances', lay not so much in class or elite society, but in the bureaucratic centralised organs of the state.[34] However, it was not until Gorbachev and, in particular, the introduction of *glas' nost,* that people, both in Eastern and Western Europe, became more fully aware about the extent and nature of inequality during Communism. As Harman writes, *glas' nost* gave rise to a wealth of information on,

---

[30] Matthews, *op. cit,* 1986. pp. 52-54.

[31] I. Kemeny, "Poverty in Hungary", *Social Science Information*, 18 (2), quoted in D. Lane *op. cit.*

[32] Milovan Djilas, for example, saw in the new Communist Party the foundations for a new ruling class, in that it used, enjoyed and disposed of national property. M. Djilas, *The New Class*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1966, cited in Peter Calvert, *The Concept of Class - An Historical Introduction*, St. Martins Press, New York, 1982.

[33] Matthews, 1976, *op. cit.* Largely based on Jewish émigré reports, Matthews showed how in the early 1970s when the average monthly wage was 130 rubles, a Party First Secretary received 900 roubles per month (plus payments in kind). Roy Medvedev, also identified a privileged stratum, "While I do not believe that the bureaucracy can be described as some kind of class I am forced to agree that those in charge of Soviet society now constitute a definite stratum, sharing certain customs and rules of conduct." Quoted in Kende and Strmiska, *op. cit.* p. 159.

[34] Hamilton and Hirszowicz, *op. cit.*, "Decisions made at the top about the rate of economic growth, the nature of investments, pay differentials, prices paid to farmers for their products [...], play the major part in determining the life chances of different occupational groups." p. 273.

> *widespread corruption, the hold of the mafia, the scale of poverty and prostitution, the deterioration of the health services, appalling pollution and immense ecological problems, and, by the summer of 1988, on the enormous privileges of the top bureaucrats.*[35]

Insights into the extent of social inequality during Communism served to reveal that the continuation between the former regimes and the post 1989 ones was not just in terms of political power. This in itself indicates some of the dangers inherent in the use of concepts such as social exclusion which preclude a structural analyses of inequality and poverty.

3.5 Rapid regime change

In Russia, when Gorbachev came into power he faced a rigid economy that was still in need of revitalisation: from 1981 to 1985 economic growth according to the official data was a mere 1.7 per cent compared with 4.8 per cent from 1961 to 1970.[36] His response to this was to encourage repressed initiative by allowing greater openness and introducing a quasi-market in the form of *glas' nost* and then *perestroika*. However, the push factor of economic stagnation and the pull factor of relative prosperity in the West meant that these reforms had to be far more radical than had been previously anticipated. These entailed the development of an internal private sector, the encouragement of foreign investors and a deeper involvement in world markets, yet all the time maintaining centralised economic planning.[37]

Gorbachev lowered the budget deficit and deterred reforms that risked imposing undue burden on the population in an effort to appease the popular demand for improved consumer goods. However, this sudden prioritisation of consumption over investment had profound implications. The Russian economy declined further and industrial output fell. Wage increases fuelled the already crisis situation where incomes grew by 12.9 per cent compared with a rise of only 9 per cent for consumer goods.[38] The shortage of goods

---

[35] Harman, Chris, "The Storm Breaks", *International Socialism,* Spring, 46, 1990. p. 6.
[36] William Moskoff, *Hard Times: Impoverishment and Protest in Perestroika Years of the Soviet Union 1985-1991,* Sharpe, London/New York, 1993. p. 9.
[37] Lewin, *op. cit.* p. 141.
[38] Moskoff, *op. cit.* p. 55.

was exacerbated by this increase in incomes leading to a situation where there were shortages in 1,159 of the 1,200 goods.[39] As a result the budget deficit and inflation escalated causing a monetary and fiscal crisis on a scale never experienced before. The much needed change from extensive to intensive growth was obstructed by the bureaucratic command economy itself. It was becoming increasingly clear that the state bureaucracy in Russia was incompatible with market forces and that the Soviet style economy could not continue in the face of alternatives.[40]

The latent inequalities that had underpinned Soviet society across the Soviet bloc began to come to the fore as economic and political chaos set in. The fundamental contradiction between the policies of *glas' nost* and *perestroika*, whereby the former provided the legal framework for people to express dissatisfaction with the latter, encouraged the articulation of popular discontent. Gorbachev's foreign policy towards Eastern Europe of allowing them to embark on reforms independent of Russia, which some have called the 'Sinatra Doctrine', triggered popular protest on a wider scale. Due to a mixture of factors rooted in an overall disillusionment with Communism ranging from economic decline, new political freedoms and mass protest, to increasing pressure from the West and ever weakening governments, the regimes in Eastern Europe collapsed one after the other.

Harman argues, however, that political and social change across Eastern Europe was achieved only in a narrow sense.[41] The continuity of power is most visible in terms of political leadership where "the transition from Communist to democratic rule is being managed by leaders who were, with few exceptions, not notably uncomfortable under the old order, and who frequently were part of its support system."[42] This has certainly been a feature of most transitions in Eastern Europe, most notably for the 'laggard' countries of South Eastern Europe, such as Bulgaria and Romania. Whereas for the 'forerunner'

---

[39] Miskoff, *op. cit.* pp. 14-15.

[40] P. R. Gregory and R. C. Stuart, *Soviet Economic Structure and Performance*, HarperCollins, New York/London, 4th edition, 1990. p. 13.

[41] Harman, *op. cit.* p. 24.

[42] T. A. Baylis, "Plus ça Change? Transition and Continuity Among Eastern European Elites", *Communist and Post Communist Studies*, 27 (3), 1994, quoted in M. Haynes, "Eastern European Transition - Some Practical and Theoretical Problems", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31 (8), February 24, 1996. p. 479.

countries the collapse proved fairly swift, for the laggard countries, the transition has been extended into a second stage of crises.

The cumulative collapse of Communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe were triggered by the events of 1989 in Hungary. The opening of its borders, allowing a Westward route for GDR citizens precipitated collapse in East Germany. Coupled with the visible withdrawal of Gorbachev, Honecker rapidly lost control and was forced to turn towards Western Germany. The 'velvet revolution' in Czechoslovakia which followed, also ensured a quick regime collapse. In contrast, regime change in South Eastern Europe was not so conclusive. The political changes in Romania were renowned for its armed conflict and the swift execution of its former Communist leader, Ceausecus and his wife. Yet the 'revolution' in Romania has been defined by some as ultimately political rather than social. The control of enterprises remained in the same hands as before and decisions were still taken by those from the old ruling party.

Likewise, in Bulgaria, the sudden removal of Zhivkov in November 1989, who had been in power for over 30 years, seemed to represent a clear break with the past. Indeed, this sudden political crisis did create new opportunities for the opposition to mobilise. However, the BCP (later changed to BSP) continued to maintain a single party majority within government well into the so-called transition period, initially under the leadership of Lukanov, then Popov and finally Zhelev. The crisis in Bulgaria was therefore extended over a much longer period punctured with intermittent uprisings, most notably those led by the UDF in 1993 and 1996.[43] Stoyanov from the UDF was elected president in November 1996 and inaugurated in January 1997. Widespread political unrest and mass demonstrations in Spring of that year finally forced the BSP led government to concede to a general election. Parliamentary elections took place on 19 April 1997, during which the UDF-led coalition, for the first time gained an overall majority with 52.2 per cent of the votes, securing 57.1 seats, compared with 22 per cent for the BSP, which secured

[43] In 1996 the banking system collapsed, production declined even further, and the national currency was devalued. Rumyana Kolarova, "Bulgaria: Could We Regain What We Have Already Lost?" *Social Research,* 63 (2), Summer, 1996.

them only 23.7 seats. This opened the way for Stoyanov with the UDF-led government headed by Ivan Kostov as prime minister to embark on belated economic and political reforms.

3.6 The 'transition'

Despite the essential continuity of power the rapid regime change signalled to the West an opportunity to encourage systemic as well as economic reform. Western market capitalism and its relative prosperity represented one of the key pull factors for Western-style reforms in Eastern Europe. With the rejection of Communism, the market was taken by both West and East European governments as the only available alternative.[44] In the words of the World Bank,

> *The ultimate goal of the transition in countries shedding central planning is to build a thriving market economy capable of delivering long-term growth in living standards. What distinguishes transition from economic reforms in other countries is the systemic change involved: reforms must penetrate to the fundamental rules of the game, to the institutions that shape behaviour and guide organizations.*[45]

The assumption underpinning the work of multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank, is that Eastern Europe must emulate the West and follow a path towards liberal democracy. The injection of free market capitalism into the economies of Eastern Europe, coupled with democratic reform is seen as the necessary means by which to achieve this.[46]

Choosing the best methods of maximising the factors of production; labour, land and capital is the main objective of a free market (such features as high unemployment indicates a failure to achieve this). In opposition to the Soviet-style political economy, free market theorists locate state intervention as the key obstacle to reaching informed and rational choices. It is believed that such choices, in terms of supply and demand, can

---

[44] The failure of a command economy and the re-introduction of market forces has reflected a world-wide shift towards free market or neo-liberal ethics. In the West this trend is identified with the apparent failure of Keynsianism, culminating in the rise of Reaganism and Thatcherism.

[45] World Bank, *From Plan to Market - World Development Report*, Washington D.C., 1996. p. 2.

[46] The concept of democratisation has tended to be restricted to the political sphere and equated with market reform. Haynes and Hussan, *op. cit.*

only be made in the context of a market determined price mechanism. According to this theory, consumers and producers acting individually through the market and responding to price changes are able to determine what should be produced, by what methods and how much each shall benefit. Given that consumer satisfaction and hence consumer sovereignty is the ideal of free-market theory, the reforms in Eastern Europe have seen a reverse in the previous neglect of consumer goods. Intrinsic to this has been the cutting back of all state intervention, and with it universal social protection.[47]

Table 3.7 Real Gross Domestic Product in Eastern Europe, 1990-1997 (1989=100)

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Czech R.	100	80.8	84.7	79.3	78.6	80.7	84.5	87.7	88.6
Slovakia	100	97.5	83.4	77.6	74.4	78.0	83.8	89.5	95.3
Hungary	100	96.5	85.2	82.6	82.0	84.4	86.0	86.7	90.5
Poland	100	88.4	82.3	84.3	87.6	91.9	98.6	104.5	111.7
Romania	100	91.8	80.0	72.9	73.9	76.5	81.7	88.0	82.2
Bulgaria	100	90.9	83.9	79.1	76.2	77.9	79.8	68.2	63.8

Source: UN/DESIPA and UN Economic Commission for Europe. [48]

To justify this reduced role for the state, free market theorists have fallen back on the 'invisible hand' of the market to argue that there is an inherent self-correcting mechanism, which helps reduce the chances of extreme imbalances. However, with huge drops in GDP and real wages (see Tables 3.7 and 3.10), coupled with widening inequalities and a growing number of people living in poverty (see Tables 3.13 and 3.14), this clearly has not been the case. For Bulgaria this has been particularly acute, whereby in line with other South Eastern economies, it has suffered a greater decline in GDP than in other East European economies. During 1990-1992, there was a cumulative drop in GDP of 44.2 per cent in Bulgaria, compared with a drop of 21.5 per cent in Poland and 27.3 per cent in Czechoslovakia.[49] This has meant that in countries like Bulgaria, problems of poverty have been particularly severe. According to a 1998 UN report on poverty in Eastern

[47] Gregory and Stuart, *op. cit.* p. 22.

[48] UN Economic Commission for Europe, Economic Survey of Europe 1995-1996: United Nations, *World Economic and Social Survey - Trends and Policies in the World Economy,* New York, 1996. p. 24. For 1996-1997: Source: *Wirtschaftslage und Reformprozesse in Mittel-und Osteurope*, Sammelband, Berlin, 1998.

[49] Anares Solimano, "The Post Socialist Transitions in Comparative Perspective", *World Development*, 21 (11), 1993. p. 1825.

Europe, 5 per cent of Bulgarians were measured as absolutely poor and about 50 per cent relatively poor.[50]

The high social costs of market reform have failed to convince free market advocates that there may be alternatives. Indeed, it has been quite the opposite. As Haynes and Husan argue, the transition has spelled out a social programme that specifically aims to conserve power through these very factors of pseudo-privatisation and a high social burden.[51] It is therefore possible to argue that the 'transition' is a specific aspect of market capitalism, in that behind the rhetoric of 'transition' there is an implicit agenda of market expansion into Eastern Europe.[52] In the words of Humphrey, "the term 'transition' suggests a goal defined by the neo-liberal model of capitalist development."[53] It can be argued that this is largely because the ultimate objective of the market is self-survival, and in order for market capitalism to live and grow in the West it must find new markets outside of itself in which to expand and exploit. The survival of East European economies is therefore essential for the continued growth and expansion of the market in the West.

3.7 The West and the 'transition'

The European Union, in particular, has much to gain from ensuring successful development in Eastern Europe. In the words of the World Bank, Eastern Europe offers the European Union an area of "exceptionally good export markets."[54] Sachs, a leading economic adviser during the transition, echoes this sentiment, when he argues that

---

[50] Cited in the "Vestnik-digest" mailing list. Archived at: <vestnik-digest@Bulgaria.com> (accessed on 20 October 1998.)

[51] M. Haynes and R. Husan, *op. cit.*

[52] This is according to the idea that capitalism is an aspect of class society, that is, a society in which class groups share common interests based on their common location in the process of production. In a capitalist society there is a fundamental divide between those who own the means of production in whatever form, and those whose only asset is their labour. The degree of alienation from the control over production signals how far a given population has effective control of private or, indeed, 'state' property. Under Communism, the degree of alienation was high suggesting that effective control of 'collective' property still lay in the hands of a few despite official dogma claiming otherwise. Haynes, *op. cit.* p. 479.

[53] Humphrey, *op. cit.* p. 9.

[54] World Bank, *op. cit.* p. 133. The Europe Agreements have allowed the EU to 'take care of marketing' in the transition economies of Eastern Europe in order that they gain access to a relatively skilled and cheap labour force. That restrictions on certain imports have remained despite the rhetoric of 'opening up', such as the unequal issuing of trade tariffs. It appears that the EU have been bold in lifting tariffs for imports into Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, however, these reduced tariffs do not cover the key industries and exporting agencies of textile, steel, agriculture, or energy. EU, *The EU Encyclopaedia and Directory*, Europa Publications, London, 2nd edition, 1996.

Western Europe will benefit greatly from the transition in terms of gaining access to "low-cost skilled labour."[55] This underpins his wider vision of East-West relations where "outward-oriented trade regimes" are seen as the way to "stimulate growth", during which "Western Europe [becomes] the logical trading partner for its Eastern neighbours."[56]

Although trade between East and West grew massively in the early years of 'transition' this has clearly not been as mutually beneficial as at first it may have appeared. The composition of trade in terms of input and export has been very uneven. For example, some countries in Eastern Europe have seen huge drops in traditionally strong exports and others have been forced to import goods that they themselves are abundant in. In Bulgaria, for example, the collapse of Comecon was of particular detriment to its food industry which was one of its key exporters and heavily dependent on trade within the Soviet bloc. Since 1989 Bulgaria has experienced a dramatic decline in processed food, with a 85 per cent drop in canned tomatoes.[57] Other major exports such as tobacco and wine have also suffered a great deal, where between 1985 and 1997 exports in tobacco declined by over two-thirds and wine by nearly a half.[58] At the same time Bulgaria found itself importing produce that had normally been a stronghold in their exports. The most notable example of this was with the shift that occurred in the trade of fruits and vegetables. While experiencing a large drop in exports in this area as outlined above, by 1997 Bulgaria had undergone a four-fold increase in the amount of fruits and vegetables that they imported.[59]

---

[55] He made this point in specific reference to Poland and its engineering sector, the 'cheapness' of which, he argues, makes it an attractive place, "to produce high-value added goods for export to Western Europe". Jeffrey Sachs, "Building a Market Economy in Poland", *Scientific American*, 266 (3), March 1992. p. 25. In a similar manner, Doris Hildebrand highlights the business potential in Eastern Europe in her discussion of the necessary business strategy EC companies must take when investing in Eastern Europe. At the top of her list of incentives are profit, low production costs and wages. D. Hildebrand, "The Restructuring Process in Central and Eastern Europe: Business Strategies for EC companies", *West European Politics,* 15 (2), April, 1992.

[56] Sachs, *op. cit.* p. 21.

[57] The export of wine in Bulgaria fell by nearly a half between 1985 and 1997. UNDP, *National Human Development Report Bulgaria 1998: The State of Transition and Transition of the State,* United Nations Development Project, Sofia, 1998. pp. 92-93.

[58] United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, *Homepage,* <http.//www.unece.org/ead/pub/survey.htm> (accessed November 1998).

[59] *Ibid.*

Undermining all of this is the failure of Western companies to prosper in countries like Bulgaria. In 1997 the Belgian-based firm Amylum decided to temporarily close its plant for maize processing in Bulgaria in response to the economic downturn. This had been one of the largest foreign investors in Bulgaria, when in 1993 it bought the plant for US$ 20 million.[60] Table 3.8 provides us with a more general picture of this uneven balance in trade. It tracks the trade patterns of Bulgaria since 1988, and shows an overall increase in exports to and imports from Western countries, compared with a huge drop in trade with other East European countries.

Table 3.8 Structure of exports and imports for Bulgaria, by groups of countries, %, in Bulgarian leva, 1988-1992.

	Exports					**Imports**				
	1988	**1989**	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**	**1988**	**1989**	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
EEurope	75.3	76.8	76.4	54.9	24.2	67.9	65.8	68.1	46.4	28.8
OECD	6.4	8.0	11.9	26.3	42.3	15.5	17.1	21.6	32.8	46.5
EC	4.6	5.5	7.9	15.7	30.8	9.7	10.3	16.3	20.7	32.6
EFTA	1.2	1.5	1.5	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.8	3.2	7.8	6.7
USA	0.2	0.6	1.7	3.4	1.7	0.9	1.5	0.6	2.9	3.0

Source: Iznos i Vnos (Exports and Imports), Quarterly Bulletin of the National Statistical Bulletin.[61]

The unequal relationship between East and West is most clearly manifested in the overt political role of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), both of which have taken a lead in the 'reconstruction' of Eastern Europe through a series of aid and lending programmes.[62] Their structural adjustment reforms claim to have two central objectives: to raise standards of living and to increase individual freedom with the protection of individual rights.[63] The World Bank and the IMF argue that the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have to undergo this 'transition' period, or as in the words of Sachs, pass through a 'valley of tears'.[64]

---

[60] UNDP, *op. cit.* p. 93.

[61] Cited in Rumen Dobrinsky *et al.,* "Economic Transition and Industrial Restructuring in Bulgaria", in M. A. Landeresmann and I. P.. Szekely (eds.), *Industrial Restructuring and Trade Orientation in Eastern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995. p. 237, Table 7.7.

[62] Swift in his discussion on North-South relations argues that the World Bank and the IMF, "are not neutral economic mechanisms but contain a powerful bias in favour of global competition, the expansion of capitalism, and corporate enterprise." Richard Swift, "Squeezing the South", *New Internationalist*, 257, July, 1994. p. 5.

[63] N. Barr and R. W. Harbison, "Hopes, Tears and Transformation", *Transition*, 5 (8), October, 1994. p. 5.

[64] Sachs, *op. cit.* p. 26.

Bulgaria joined the World Bank in September 1990. Since then the World Bank, through its financial assistance, has helped shape much of Bulgaria's subsequent macroeconomic policy. Under its first two loans, namely the Technical Assistance Loan (US$17 million) in June 1991, and the Structural Adjustment Loan (US$250 million) in August 1991, the World Bank gave policy advice and institution building support. Other loans have included: US$93 million for an Energy Project in 1993; US$125 million for a Debt and Debt Service Reduction Loan in 1994; US$26 million to improve the quality and efficiency of health services in 1996; and a US$100 million Financial and Enterprise Sector Adjustment Loan in 1997.[65] These have involved to varying degrees cutting back the state, a programme of privatisation and deregulation, and the unleashing of market forces.[66] The implications of this have been rising inflation, a decline in real wages, rising income inequality, and a substantial rise in unemployment and poverty (see Tables 3.7-3.13).[67]

In order that the 'transition' countries be eligible for large scale aid (i.e. that which exceeds emergency relief), the World Bank and IMF stipulate that they, "must be ready to improve their governance through political and economic liberalisation", in line with the Western blueprint.[68] Adherence to Western political models is therefore one of the main conditions under which the Bank and IMF operate.[69] The benefits of transition are seen as outweighing the problems,

---

[65] These figures were taken from the World Bank Web Page, <http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/offrep/eca/bgrcb.htm> (accessed September 1997).

[66] There have been various debates about the pace and order of reform, mainly between the 'gradualists' and the 'Big Bang theorists'. The latter have been most influential in their encouragement of the simultaneous implementation of the following interdependent elements: releasing of prices in order for them to find their equilibrium levels; elimination of restrictions on private economic activity; discipline to be imposed on remaining state enterprises; and the establishment of price stability. There were variations even within this school of thought, such as Kornai, who talked of a 'step-by-step' approach while Sachs referred to reforms in a time span of 3-5 years.

[67] For example, between January 1991 and the end of 1994 food prices in Bulgaria had increased from 100 to nearly 3,500. Source: National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria, cited by IMF, *Bulgaria - Recent Economic Developments,* IMF Staff Country Report, No. 96/13, February 1996, p. 77.

[68] Jeffrey Sachs, "Beyond Bretton Woods-A New Blueprint", *The Economist,* 1 October 1994. p. 28. It was reported in the *The Financial Times* that the IMF saw the need for, "bold and comprehensive reform so as to put in place all the main elements of a free-market system from the start", quoted in Ian Jefferies, *Socialist Economies and the Transition to the Market: A Guide,* Routledge, London, 1993. pp. 333-34.

[69] For example, in Bulgaria, the World Bank provided nearly US$100 million funding only on condition that the former state-owned enterprises shares would be distributed among fifteen investment funds. These funds, although not officially owned by Western financial experts, are certainly staffed by them.

the economic benefits of moving into the world market are the benefits of internal market liberalisation - writ enormous. Capital, goods, and ideas cross borders in response to demand and supply [...] fuelling faster growth in productivity, trade volumes, and national income. At the same time integration helps lock countries onto the path toward more-open trade, while membership in international institutions spurs domestic institution building.[70]

Table 3.9 Annual Inflation Rate 1990-1997 (CPI annual average % change)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Czech R.	10.8	56.6	11.1	20.8	10.0	9.1	8.8	9.5
Slovakia	10.8	61.2	10.1	23.2	13.4	9.9	5.8	6.5
Hungary	28.9	35.0	23.0	22.5	18.8	28.2	23.6	18.4
Poland	585.8	70.3	43.0	35.3	32.2	27.8	19.9	16.0
Romania	5.1	161.1	210.4	256.1	136.1	32.3	38.8	145.0
Bulgaria	26.3	333.5	82.0	73.0	96.3	62.0	123.0	1,049.0

Source: UNICEF, 1998.

In a similar manner, the reasons given for the economic crisis in Eastern Europe have tended to focus on the way in which market reforms have been implemented rather than questioning their initial integrity. Various commentators, for example, have claimed that market reforms failed either because they were only half measures, or because those who did undertake shock therapy pulled back too soon.[71] However, as highlighted by Haynes and Husan, it has become increasingly clear that more long term factors have contributed to this crisis situation. First, the transition began in the context of a short term world recession, and against the backdrop of a longer term slow down in the world economy. As a result, Western aid and investment has not been as forthcoming as had been hoped.[72] Second, the reliance on rapid liberalisation as the answer rested on the flawed assumption that such reform would lead to the appropriate supply response. Third, the collapse of Comecon has meant the loss of East European's main self-sustaining trade network forcing them instead to turn towards Western markets.[73]

[70] World Bank, *op. cit.* p. 132.

[71] The World Bank in its 1996 report, for example, distinguished between those countries that had embraced reform and those that did so less effectively, of which Bulgaria was one. *Ibid.*

[72] The 1995 Human Development Report for Bulgaria acknowledged that foreign investment has been "rather limited" stating that "the average investment of the foreign companies registered in [Bulgaria] is merely US$ 1000". UNDP, *Bulgaria: Human Development Report*, Sofia, 1995. p. 2.

[73] Haynes and Husan, *op. cit.*

The practical difficulty of measuring the transition has also presented problems for governments and analysts for dealing with the crisis. In Bulgaria, for example, the parliament rejected the 1997 report of the National Statistic Institute and replaced its chief on the basis that the report had relied on 'inauthentic' data about the state of the real sector and the 'grey economy'. According to UN data, the share of the 'grey economy' in Bulgaria is 16.8 per cent. Unconfirmed figures of Bulgarian experts, however, claim that it accounts for 45-60 per cent of the country's economy. Such huge discrepancies reveal the problems that have underpinned both official and unofficial attempts at explaining the 'transition'. This does not detract from the fact that, ultimately, the economic crisis is a product of both long term economic decline and unequal relations between East and West. The 'transition' is a period of market reform characterised by economic crisis and growing social inequality.

3.8 Social inequality during the 'transition'

We have seen that social inequality was already a feature of Communist society, but since 1989 this has been further fuelled by the large social burden imposed by market reform. As a result, social inequality on a huge scale has become a defining feature of the 'transition'. Problems of measuring inequality have complicated the process of interpretation in terms of reaching a consensus about how best to measure living standards during the Soviet era and how to then translate this effectively to the post 1989 situation. UNICEF, for example, note the following obstacles to reliable survey data in Eastern Europe: the increasing number of small firms and self-employed, which are often excluded from earnings surveys; increasing complexity of social security benefits, especially in terms of means tested benefits; the introduction of personal income tax which may prevent accurate reporting of incomes in household surveys; high inflation, which may render data on annual incomes meaningless; and the changed relationship between the citizen and the state which may in itself reduce the willingness to co-operate with official enquiries.[74] On the other hand, they observe a number of improvements.

[74] UNICEF note an overall drop in response rates in the countries of Eastern Europe. UNICEF, *Education for All?* The MONEE Project CEE/CIS/Baltics, Regional Monitoring Report, No. 5, 1998. p. 4.

Data more accurately represent the distribution of economic welfare with price liberalisation and the removal of subsidies. Statistical offices have also extended the coverage of surveys to groups previously ignored. Although this has enhanced comparability with the West, the adoption of new concepts and methodologies has reduced its ability to compare meaningfully with pre-reform sources.[75] This section attempts to unravel some of these complexities in its exploration of some of the more general trends of social inequality during the 'transition'.

It was generally agreed that the releasing of market forces in the aftermath of Communist collapse required some degree of social protection but there were disputes as to its extent. In Russia, Gorbachev had already set the standard in the early years of *perestroika*, when he proclaimed that: "socialism has nothing to do with equalising," and outlined the new 'socialist' criteria for distributing social benefits, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work."[76] This served to lay the legitimating foundations for a process of withdrawal of state protection throughout Eastern Europe, as Hungarian Finance Minister, Lajos Bokros remarked, "The universal entitlement will have to go."[77] Coupled with rising inflation, a decline in real incomes, rising income inequality, and a substantial rise in unemployment, this welfare retreat signalled the need for securing some alternative forms of compensation. Rather than representing a concern with social justice, however, moves to provide some form of social safety net were more informed by the political concern of protecting market reform. In the words of Chu and Gupta: "For market reforms to be politically viable, adverse impacts on vulnerable segments of society must be mitigated."[78]

Various problems have emerged that pose obstacles to the effective implementation of a reduced welfare policy. First, there is popular expectation: where the old command

---

[75] UNICEF, *op. cit.*

[76] Quoted by Deacon, *op. cit.* p. 182.

[77] Lajos Bokros (interview with), "Hungarian Finance Minister Lajos Bokros Explains his Package", *Transition*, 6 (5-6) May/June, 1995. p. 13. OECD News Release, *Beyond 2000: The New Social Policy Agenda*, 1995.

[78] Ke-Young Chu and Sanjeev Gupta, "Protecting the Poor-Social Safety Nets During Transition", *Finance and Development*, 30 (2), June, 1993. p. 24.

economies failed the new market ones have been expected to succeed. Second, past neglect of effective targeting has provided weak foundations for the development of new style means tested benefits. Third, new problems of marketisation have presented a specific set of problems, such as declining real wages and high unemployment (see Tables 3.10 and 3.11).

Table 3.10 Real Wages 1989-1996 (1989=100)

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Czech R.	100	93.6	68.9	76.0	78.8	84.9	92.2	100.4
Slovakia	100	94.2	67.3	72.6	69.2	71.4	75.3	81.9
Hungary	100	94.3	87.7	86.5	83.1	89.1	78.2	74.3
Poland	100	75.6	75.4	73.3	71.2	71.6	73.7	77.9
Romania	100	105.2	88.9	77.3	64.4	64.6	72.7	79.8
Bulgaria	100	111.5	68.0	76.7	77.6	63.7	60.2	49.6

Source: UNICEF, 1998.

Finally, the lack of money available has imposed severe limitations on government spending in this area.[79] In many respects the new system of social welfare is one very much shaped by a neo-liberal reaction to the perceived failures of the old system. Other factors have also played a part, such as, which political party is in power; the extent of influence of the Catholic/Orthodox church; and the extent of support from multilateral agencies.[80]

Table 3.11 Annual registered unemployment rate, 1989-1997 (%)

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Czech R.	-	0.3	2.6	3.1	3.0	3.3	3.0	3.1	-
Slovakia	-	0.6	6.6	11.4	12.7	14.4	13.8	12.6	-
Hungary	0.4	0.8	8.5	12.3	12.1	10.4	10.4	10.5	10.4
Poland	-	6.1	11.8	13.6	16.4	16.0	14.9	13.6	-
Romania	-	-	3.0	8.2	10.4	10.9	9.5	6.3	-
Bulgaria	-	-	-	13.2	15.8	14.0	11.4	11.1	12.5

Source: UNICEF, 1998.

Structural adjustment represented the answer for many transition advisors, who sought ways of correlating market reform with social security provision. This could only be

[79] Deacon, *op. cit.* p. 184.
[80] *Ibid.* pp. 194-197

done, it was argued, by fundamentally changing the ground rules of production and exchange.[81] According to Gary McManon structural adjustment policy ultimately rests on a commitment to capitalist markets,

> *A [structural adjustment policy] generally consists of a devaluation of the currency, a reduction of government subsidies to firms, an attempt to get rid of or reduce the anti-export bias of the economy, some liberalisation of the labour market so as to reduce real wages, a reduction of the government deficit, and an assortment of other policies which will make the economy more reliant on prices or capitalist markets.*[82]

Demery and Addison in their support of structural adjustment policy praise its long term benefits of alleviating poverty over the adverse short terms effect of aggravating it. The solution, they argue, is to increase the productive capacity of the poor to the greatest extent possible by relying less on transfer payments, e.g. income support,

> *Insofar as the poor are economically active, a potential exists for raising their primary incomes through their direct involvement in the process of structural adjustment. Benefits may also extend to some of the non-working poor who receive transfers from family members who work.*[83]

The argument rests on finding ways to encourage the most impoverished to help themselves, such as by enhancing their access to productive assets; raising their return on assets; improving their employment opportunity; ensuring their access to education and health services; and, as a last resort, supplementing their incomes with transfers.[84] It is anticipated that such an approach would not only alleviate extreme poverty, but also increase overall output and productivity, therefore, proving consistent with the aims of structural adjustment,

> *[If] structural adjustment reduces prices distortions, enhances competition, and erodes monopoly profits and economic rents, the incomes of the wealthy are likely to fall and those of the poor to rise [...] if [it] ultimately promotes economic growth, the alleviation of poverty will undoubtedly be an easier proposition.*[85]

---

[81] This was an argument that had already been applied to the Third World situation. L. Demery and T. Addison, "The Alleviation of Poverty under Structural Adjustment", *A World Bank Publication,* Washington D.C. 1987. p. 2.

[82] Gary McManon, "Structural Adjustment with a Human Face - A Comment on Adelman and Taylor", *The Journal of Development Studies*, 28 (1), October, 1991. p. 150.

[83] Demerey and Addison, *op. cit.* p. 3.

[84] *Ibid.* In the light of huge devaluation that has destroyed life savings, tackling the pension problem has been a major concern. This has led to such suggestions as raising the retirement age. S. Gupta and R. Hagemann, "Social Protection During Russia's Economic Transformation", *Finance and Development*, 31 (4), December, 1994. p. 17.

[85] Demery and Addison, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

In the light of diminishing resources and increasing poverty, structural adjustment policies are portrayed as saviours in that they enable governments to secure the maximum benefit from limited allocations,

> *the inconsistency between increasing transfers to the poor and cutting government budgets must be resolved by restructuring such transfers to maximise the benefits for those in greatest need, while reducing benefits to the better off.* [86]

This has encouraged a focus on ideas of a social safety net in order to ensure some kind of protection, however limited, to those considered most in need.[87] Although never intended for long term use, the social safety net has replaced principles of universalism and is increasingly being relied upon in the transition economies of Eastern Europe.[88]

The logic of this argument rests on the assumption that the poor need to become more productive and less dependent on welfare. This is also the premise of social exclusion theory and its strategies of inclusion which articulate the need for improved targeting of excluded groups. Rather than offering a conceptual framework that tackles social inequality head on, social exclusion theory rests upon ideas of self-help to promote 'inclusion'. Consequently, the concept of social exclusion has proved a useful ally to the social-safety net approach and its commitment to the selective assistance of only the 'most vulnerable'.

In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe the term 'social safety net' has been used in a loose sense to encompass a variety of limited social protection measures and social services. Sometimes the emphasis is on specific circumstances connected with structural adjustment policies or with measures to help those through 'short-term stress'. Chu and

---

[86] Demerey and Addison, *op. cit.* p. 35.

[87] The idea of a social safety net was an original component of Beveridge's welfare which stated the need for a system of means-tested benefits to secure a safety net for the minority whose needs are not met by the wider scheme. Designed at a time when full employment appeared achievable, the safety net was not intended for long term use. M. Hill, *Understanding Social Policy*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 5th edition, 1997. p. 26.

[88] Not all social policy reform advice, however, favour only social safety nets. See for example Barr and Harbison, *op. cit.* For a discussion on the conflicts that have emerged between European and US camps inside the World Bank relating to issues of social welfare, see Bob Deacon, *Global Social Policy: International Organisations and the Future of Welfare,* Sage Publications, London, 1997.

Gupta, for example, argue that benefits should be limited to families with low per capita incomes, but quickly emphasise their reluctance towards benefits in principle: "Even if a mechanism to monitor household incomes is devised, these benefits can create work disincentives."[89] The failures of state subsidies under Communism to adequately and fairly meet the social needs of the population has been used to reinforce this argument against universal state intervention. Chu and Gupta, for example, argue that,

> *Since high-income households often consume more of these subsidised product than low-income households do, subsidies provide more benefits in absolute terms to high-income than to low-income households.*[90]

The 1996 IMF report in its explanation of the rationale behind the social safety net in Eastern Europe is reminiscent of anti-welfare arguments in the 1940/50s. The report emphasised "avoiding distortions of labour supply" by finding "short term" remedies only to those "individuals adversely affected".[91] The so-called challenge of avoiding 'transformation traps' in Eastern Europe and the Western tendency to find ways of distinguishing between deserving and non-deserving poor has led to an approach based on a hierarchy of priorities and a language of 'targeting'.[92] Milanovic, however, points out that even if perfect targeting is achieved in Eastern Europe, transfers for the poor would only just bring them up to the poverty line.[93]

As a consequence, the massive drop in income for the majority of the population, the growing differentiation between social groups and the rapid growth in extreme poverty for certain groups have all been reduced to mere "short term difficulties", which according to Cahill need not "put into question the necessity for and wisdom of economic

---

[89] Chu and Gupta, *op. cit.* p. 26. However, in 1985 a study was carried out into the myths of persistence poverty, which argued that poverty programmes of social assistance did not necessarily generate dependency. This was demonstrated through the relatively weak links between the welfare status of the parents and that of their children. Mary Corcoran, *et al.*, "Myth and Reality: The Causes and Persistence of Poverty", *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 4 (4), 1985. pp. 516-536.

[90] Chu and Gupta, *op. cit.* p. 26.

[91] IMF, *World Economic Outlook*, World Economic and Financial Surveys, Washington, May, 1996. p. 83.

[92] See for example, Richard Portes, "Transformation Traps", *The Economic Journal*, 104, September, 1994.

[93] Branco Milanovic, "A Cost of Transition: 50 million New Poor and Growing Inequality", *Transition*, 5 (8) October, 1994. p. 2.

reform."[94] This 'wisdom', however, has failed to adequately explain or deal with these continuing problems of poverty and social inequality. Further still, the rhetoric of making the system 'cost effective' whereby only 'vulnerable' groups are targeted has clearly led to a series of problems, not least of which has been the failure to address growing social inequality. The arbitrary distinction between eligible/ineligible has led to the discrimination and stigmatisation of certain groups. Means testing benefits and increased administrative needs have added to rather than saved on costs to social spending. Furthermore, rather than leading to a re-evaluation of the transition and market reform, the persistence of poverty has instead confirmed for many analysts that it is forces of social exclusion, rather than of market capitalism, that represent the greatest challenge to society and its progress.

3.9 Declining living standards

The nature of social inequality in Eastern Europe during the transition has evolved as an extension of patterns that existed under Communism namely: declining living standards; stretching social differentiation; and the increasing visibility of poverty groups. Declining living standards has most obviously been tied to market reform and its implications of economic contraction and rapid inflation. Although measuring the scale of this decline has proved problematic, the scale of falling living standards can be detected in general terms along a number of lines.

First has been the massive increase in unemployment. By 1994, 10-15 per cent of the labour force in Eastern Europe lacked work and over 40 per cent of these had been jobless for more than year.[95] According to figures produced by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), between October 1990 and June 1992, enterprises across Eastern Europe cut total employment by 15 per cent, and in mid-1992, 55 per cent of all

---

[94] C. Cahill, "From Marx to Market", *The OECD Observer*, 182, June/July, 1993. p. 13. Pro-market reforms did acknowledge, however reluctantly, that the governments were likely to face difficult implementation issues entailing substantial economic and social costs, but saw these as only initial and superficial consequences that would fade in the long term. W. Wapenhaus "The Challenge of Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe", *Finance and Development,* 27 (4), December, 1991, pp. 2-5.

[95] O. Blanchard *et al.*, "Unemployment in Eastern Europe", *Finance and Development*, 31 (4), Dec. 1994. p. 7. Despite this, Sachs stuck to his argument that unemployment insurance was not worthy of implementation in that it easily outpaced budgetary realities. Sachs, *op. cit.*,1992. pp. 21-22.

establishments estimated that they could produce current levels of output with fewer workers.[96] As Table 3.11 indicates the rise in unemployment has been particularly acute for a country like Bulgaria.[97]

Compared to many transition economies the Bulgarian experience is often seen as unusual insofar as unemployment soared very quickly to levels higher than elsewhere and subsequently has remained at comparatively high levels. The raw data on unemployment, however, tell only part of the story. Many of the unemployed in Bulgaria are considered as long term unemployed, a feature common to most other 'transition' economies, which, as discussed below, have been identified as forming a new pocket of poverty. There is also a clear regional disparity between rates of unemployment in Bulgaria.[98]

Table 3.12 Number of those entitled to unemployment benefit in the Rousse region of Bulgaria 1993-1995.

	1993	**1994**	**1995**
Registered unemployed entitled to benefits	27,366	18,870	15,093
Registered unemployed not entitled to benefits	38,810	37,340	41,509

Source: Regional Employment Office, Rousse, 1995

In Rousse, the registered unemployed stood as high as 20.7 per cent in 1993, compared with 8.8 per cent in Sofia.[99] Further to this, an increasing number of these registered unemployed are being denied compensation. Table 3.12, based on figures recorded by the Employment Bureau for the Rousse region of Bulgaria, shows how the number of those eligible for claiming benefit has declined, and conversely, how the numbers of those not entitled to benefits has increased.

[96] ILO, *World of Work*, 2, February, 1993. p. 2.

[97] In Bulgaria, an unemployed worker is someone considered to be of working age, who has not signed a work contract, who does not exercise any kind of paid activity, and who is registered with an employment office as seeking work.

[98] See also Donald W. Buckwalter, "Spatial Inequality, Foreign Investment, and Economic Transition in Bulgaria", *Professional Geographer*, 47 (3), 1995.

[99] Garabed Minassian and Stoyan Totev, "The Bulgarian Economy in Transition -Regional Aftereffects", *Eastern European Economics*, 34 (3), May/June, 1996. p. 64, Table 11.

Second has been the drop in real wages, which is another significant factor to consider in analysing the overall decline in living standards (see Table 3.10). The 1998 Human Development Report revealed that between 1990 and 1998 the real income of Bulgarian households had declined by 65.6 per cent. One of the implications of this was that although the availability of many consumer goods has drastically improved the purchasing power of the population almost halved between 1992 and 1996.[100]

Rising unemployment coupled with declining real wages has contributed to increasing rates of absolute poverty (see Tables 3.13 and 3.14).[101] In particular reference to Bulgaria, Table 14 shows how the number of people with incomes below the social standard minimum has risen to nearly four fifths of the population and the number of people with an income below the minimum living standard has reached two thirds of the population. This is also reflected in the share of income spent of foodstuffs which, now that former state guarantees have been removed, is a useful indicator for measuring poverty. In Bulgaria the proportion of income spent on foodstuffs has been on the increase from some 36 per cent at the beginning of 1993, to 51.2 per cent at the end of 1996, to a further 55.9 per cent at the end of 1997.[102]

---

[100] UNDP, 1998, *op. cit.* p. 44. See also, UNDP, 1995, *op. cit.*

[101] The setting of a poverty line is central to any analysis on poverty and inequality. In high inflation countries, poverty lines are inflation-adjusted on a regular basis, however, as Fields articulates in reference to the transition economics of Eastern Europe, "we must not increase the poverty line by the rate of economic growth for this would lose the notion of poverty as a state of absolute economic deprivation" Gary S. Fields, "Poverty and Income Distribution - Data for Measuring Poverty and Inequality Changes in the Developing Countries", *Journal of Development Economics*, 44, 1994. pp. 90-91.

[102] UNDP, *op. cit.* 1998, p. 44.

Table 3.13 Poverty headcount (%) and total number of poor (in millions) in Eastern Europe, 1987-1994

	Poverty headcount (%)		Total number of poor (millions)	
	1987/88	**1993/94**	**1987-88**	**1993/4**
Czech R.	0	<1	0	0.1
Slovakia	0	<1	0	0
Hungary	<1	3	0.1	0.3
Poland	6	19	2.1	7.4
Romania	6	39	1.3	8.9
Bulgaria	2	33	0.1	2.9

Source: World Bank, 1996.[103]

Table 3.14 Impoverishment of the population in Bulgaria 1990-1994

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Population with income below:					
Minimum social standard -%*	37	57	62	65	88
Minimum living standard - %*	-	-	38	43	67
Population with income below:					
50% of the average wage - %	8	10	19	19.5	-

Calculated on the basis of the consumer 'shopping basket' containing 497 items in the first place and 496 in the second but with varying quantities of goods and services.
Source: UNDP, 1998.

Third has been changing mortality and morbidity rates, which offer another indication of the rising levels of both relative and absolute poverty. Cornia, for example, in specific reference to the transition in Eastern Europe, notes that, "sharply reduced food intake compounded by greater dietary imbalances and by the deterioration of hygiene, sanitation and housing conditions have [...] likely affected mortality by weakening resistance to disease."[104] In Bulgaria evidence of this could be seen in the changing pattern of meat and dairy consumption whereby for the general population it has shrunk. As a result, morbidity rates have been on the increase. For example between 1980-1990 the annual illness from tuberculosis in Bulgaria fell from 37.0 to 25.1 per hundred thousand. However, from 1991, the annual rate began to increase reaching 38.0 per hundred thousand in 1993.[105]

[103] The poverty line is $PPP 120 per person per month at 1990 prices. Branco Milanovic, "Income, Inequality and Poverty during the Transition", *World Bank Research Paper Series*, No. 11, Washington D.C., World Bank, 1996.
[104] G. A. Cornia, "Poverty, Food Consumption, and Nutrition During the Transition to the Market Economy in Eastern Europe", *American Economic Review: AEA Papers and Proceedings*, 84 (2), May, 1994.
[105] UNDP, *op. cit.*, 1995. p. 54.

Finally, and perhaps one of the most revealing indicators of declining living standards has been an overall decline in the natural increase rate in Bulgaria. Between the periods 1986-1990 and 1991-1993 there was a drop in the birth rate from 12.7 to 10.4. Combined with a rising death rate from 11.9 between 1986-1990 to 12.6 between 1991-1993 these two trends have resulted in, for the first time since 1900, an overall decline in the natural increase rate (-2.2 between 1991-1993, compared with 0.8 for 1986-1990). This stood in stark contrast to the period between 1900 and 1985, during which the natural increase rate had never sunk below 0.8, which during this period maintained an average increase rate of 10.3. [106]

3.10 Stretching social differentiation

The drop in overall income, the rise in unemployment, and increasing levels of poverty hitting more and more people have been largely put down to the wider economic crisis and its implications of rising inflation. The inequalities that lie behind these macro figures however are more difficult to explain and justify. Stretching differentiation between social groups in terms of personal and household incomes has been a major defining aspect of social inequality during the transition. It is estimated that on average income inequality across Eastern Europe has increased by around 5/6 Gini points from 24 in 1987 to 30 in 1993.[107] The Gini point measurement offers an accessible and attractive framework for displaying differences in levels of social inequality over time and between countries. At the same time, if it is not used in conjunction with more specific measurements of income differentials, the Gini coefficient indicator runs risk of over-simplifying the picture. Taking this into account, a closer examination of income distribution is called for.

In Bulgaria, the increase in income differentiation has been particularly visible. In 1991 the richest 10 per cent were in receipt of 12 per cent of the total income of the population,

---

[106] Zahari Karamfilov, "The Demographic Situation in Bulgaria: State, Trends, Prospects", *Bulgarian Military Review*, 3 (4), Winter, 1995. p. 73.

[107] Milanovic, 1994, *op. cit.* pp. 3-4. However, we must be at least a little cautious of such figures, in that during surveys people tend to underestimate their incomes, for fear that the information may be misused.

which by 1993 had risen to 24 per cent. Meanwhile, the poorest 10 per cent in 1991 were in receipt of only 5 per cent of the total national income, which by 1993 had fallen to 3.2 per cent.[108] Nevertheless, for a lower-middle income country, Bulgaria is viewed as having relatively low income inequality. For example, using the 1992 Individual Budget and Households survey data, complied by the National Statistics Institute (NSI) of Bulgaria (n=2,508), Hussan and Peters argue that compared with the OECD Gini coefficient average of 34 per cent, the level of income inequality in Bulgaria is relatively low, standing at 26 per cent.[109] However, a study on the distribution of the income tax burden reveals that this feature of low income inequality is rapidly changing.[110]

Table 3.15 shows an overall widening of household income inequality across all the countries of Eastern Europe between 1989 and 1995. According to one study, however, it is not so much the range of inequality that reveals the intrinsic changes during the 'transition', but more the predictors and patterns of determination of earnings.[111] Vecernik finds that the key determinants of disparities in earnings during the transition have generally been that of gender and education, rather than of ownership and branch.[112] The findings of Belava *et al.* seem to support this, where in Bulgaria traditional indicators of inequality are being reversed in terms of the traditional rural/urban divide. In February 1991 they observed that incomes of rural workers exceeded those of urban workers by 12 per cent.[113] Vecernik also makes the important distinction between per capita income calculation and household income disparities where the former all too easily disguises inequality within the household. He shows that while inequality of per capita income was relatively slight in the countries of Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia in 1992, the disparities of total household income were much greater.[114]

---

[108] UNDP, *op. cit.* , 1995. p. 16.

[109] Fareed M. A. Hussan and R. Kyle Peters Jr., "The Structure of Incomes and Social Protection During the Transition: The Case of Bulgaria, *Europe-Asia Studies,* 48 (4), 1996. pp. 635-636.

[110] Fareed M. A. Hussan and Zelijko Bogetic, "Effects of Personal Income Tax on Income Distribution: Example from Bulgaria", *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 14 (4), 1996.

[111] Jiri Vecernik, "Incomes in Central Europe: Distributions, Patterns and Perceptions", *Journal of European Social Policy,* 6 (2), 1996. p. 105, Figure 2. Based on the survey, *Social Stratification in Eastern Europe after 1989.*

[112] *Ibid,* pp. 104-105.

[113] Iskra Beleva, Daniela Bobeva, Silvia Dilova and Asen Mitchkovski, "Bulgaria: Labour Market Trends and Policies" in Georg Fischer and Guy Standing (eds.), *Structural Change in Central and Eastern Europe: Labour Market and Social Policy Implications,* OECD, Paris, 1992.

[114] *Ibid.* p. 108, Table 3.

Table 3.15 Index of income inequality - Gini coefficient of net per capita household income, 1989-1995 (%)

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Czech R.	18.5	20.1	22.2	21.0	21.4	23.4	-
Slovakia	19.5	19.1	19.9	20.3	22.9	22.5	-
Hungary	21.4	-	20.5	-	23.0	-	-
Poland	24.9	23.0	26.0	27.0	29.0	30.0	32.1
Romania	23.5	22.9	25.6	26.7	28.2	28.4	-
Bulgaria	-	25.0	28.0	32.0	35.0	37.0	38.0

Source: Unicef, 1997.

3.11 Poverty Groups

Finally, the emergence of 'poverty groups' has represented for many the most alarming indicator of growing social inequality during the transition. This has raised issues about those at the 'bottom of the pile', where indicators of sex, age, ethnicity and ability have been used to reveal how poverty affects different groups to different degrees. The emergence of poverty groups in Eastern Europe has largely been discussed in terms of 'risk' groups, and include most commonly, young people, the elderly, the disabled, the unemployed, and large or single headed family households.[115] For example, in Bulgaria, the elderly have been particularly hard hit. In February 1997, the average pension amounted to less than US$5 per month, when bread cost about US$0.50 and a dozen eggs US$1.[116]

The long term unemployed are considered as another key risk group. At the beginning of 1997 the figures for long term unemployment in Bulgaria had decreased slightly, but were no less significant standing at 23.1 per cent in January and rising to 30.4 per cent by January 1998.[117] Of all the age groups youth unemployment is the highest, who are more than most prone to long term unemployment. In 1993 more than 45 per cent of all

[115] See Gyorgy Sziraczki and James Windell, "Impact of Employment Restructuring on Disadvantaged Groups in Hungary and Bulgaria", *International Labour Review,* 131 (4-5), 1992.

[116] "Economic Review", *FBIS,* 22 July 1996, quoted in UNDP, 1998, *op. cit.*

[117] Based on data from NSI, UNDP, 1998, *op. cit.* p. 44. The Bulgarian Unemployment Survey (BUS) carried out by a team of Bulgarian and American social scientists between 1991 and 1992 revealed that as much as 60 per cent of the unemployed had been unemployed for a period of one year. The authors argue that if this were to reflect the total volume of unemployment, then in mid-1992, 60 per cent of the unemployed in Bulgaria were 'long term unemployed'. Derek C. Jones and Takao Kato, "The Nature and the Determinants of Labour Market Transitions in Former Communist Economies: Evidence from Bulgaria", *Industrial Relations*, 36 (2), 1997. p. 235.

registered unemployed young persons in Bulgaria were long term unemployed. By 1997, this had deteriorated further. Those under the age of 29 accounted for nearly a quarter of the total registered unemployed at the beginning of 1997.[118] Women are also over represented among the unemployed. In Bulgaria the participation rate of women was almost 93 per cent in 1989, which in 1991 dropped to about 81 per cent.[119] According to the Bulgarian NSI, by 1997 this had far from improved, in that women accounted for 54 per cent of the total registered unemployed.[120]

Ethnic minorities are another group who have suffered disproportionately during the transition in terms of unemployment and poverty. Many NGOs established in post-1989 Eastern Europe, for example, have dedicated themselves to tackling this ethnic dimension of social inequality. Various studies have shown that the concentration of ethnic minority groups in low or unskilled employment sectors has made them more susceptible to unemployment. The Pomaks in Bulgaria, for example, have suffered more than most in certain regions from the decline in agricultural and textile production.[121]

Unemployment has been particularly acute for Gypsies across Eastern Europe. The privatisation of land, the shut down of obsolete basic industries and the laying off of least skilled workers have disproportionately affected Gypsies throughout Eastern Europe. Gypsies are experiencing a double blow across Eastern Europe, that caused by: the effects of state withdrawal; market reform; and widespread discrimination.[122]

Problems of measurement, and in particular lack of reliable data, have made it difficult to assess the exact proportions of Gypsy suffering. However, Table 3.16 gives us some indication of the level of impoverishment experienced by Gypsies in Romania, the

---

[118] UNDP, 1998, *op. cit.* p. 46.

[119] Sziraczki and Windell, *op. cit.* p. 477.

[120] UNDP, 1998, *op. cit.*. p. 46.

[121] Committee for the Defence of Minority Rights (Bulgaria), *Annual Report 1995*, Inter Ethnic Initiative, Sofia, 1995. p. 7.

[122] Jean-Pierre Liégeois and Nicolae Gheorghe, *Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority,* Minority Rights Group International Report, 4, 1995.

country that has the largest number of Gypsies living within its borders, and one that is considered as one of the least developed in the region.

Table 3.16 The number of families living below the minimum level in Romania (1993)

	Decent (DL)%	Subsistence (SL)%
Gypsy Population	80.9	62.9
Total Population	42.0	16.0

Source: E. Zamfir and C. Zamfir, using the "minimum decent level of living" and "subsistence level" calculated by the Research Institute of the Quality of Life.

In terms of unemployment figures for Gypsies, there are many discrepancies. According to official data, unemployment for Gypsies in Bulgaria since 1989 has tended to hover around the 60 per cent mark, a figure familiar to most countries in Eastern Europe.[123] However, there is a widespread rejection of such figures at the ground level, where according to Gypsy leaders within the Bulgarian NGO sector, the real figure is much higher. Although the validity of their claims was not clear, it was certainly the case that in their view official figures were inaccurate, and that unemployment for Gypsies was reaching near total in some places. According to one source, the unemployment rate for Gypsies in 1997 was considered as high as 80 per cent in some areas compared to the national average, 13-14 per cent. Others put it higher at 90 per cent, or even 98-100 per cent in some areas.[124] A survey carried out in 1994 (n=939) with Gypsies throughout Bulgaria seemed to support these higher estimations, which put the overall unemployment figure for Gypsies at 76 per cent, observing, at the same time, sharp regional disparities. In Sofia, for example, unemployment for Gypsies stood at 62 per cent, compared with 81 per cent in rural areas.[125] In terms of disparities within Gypsy communities, however, there is considerably less information available.[126]

---

[123] Alain Reyniers, "Gypsy Populations and their Movements within Central and Eastern Europe and Towards some OECD Countries", *International Migration and Labour Market Policies - Occasional Papers*, No. 1, OECD/GD(95)20, Paris, 1995. pp. 27-29.

[124] Information gathered during the following interviews (see Appendix 2 for full details): A (5) 20.10.97; A (6) 20.10.97; and A (7) 21.10.97.

[125] Tomova, *op. cit,*. p. 71.

[126] Elena and Catalin Zamfir discuss the results of a 1992 survey carried out with Gypsies in Romania, in which they found that considerably more women (70 per cent) than men (22.3 per cent) were unemployed. UNICEF, E. Zamfir and C. Zamfir, *The Romany Population - Socio-Economic Situation*, Series: Social Policy No. 8, UNICEF, Bucharest, January 1993.

These patterns of inequality show an unequal share of deprivation for certain sectors of the populations in Eastern Europe during the 'transition'. It is clear that within the overall decline of living standards, increasing polarisation has secured wealth and prosperity for a few at the expense of extreme poverty for the rest. Ultimately, Gypsies in Eastern Europe are considered as one of the most severely affected groups during the transition with the highest numbers living in absolute poverty, some of the highest unemployment rates (near 100 per cent in some regions) and low school attendance rates. The concept of social exclusion has emerged as one of the main policy driven responses to these disturbing trends and claims to offer solutions within the boundaries of the existing socio-economic and political framework.

3.12 Social exclusion during the 'transition'

The scale of the crisis in the transition economies of Eastern Europe has been huge and in this respect is quite unique. During this period we have seen the apparent development of class inequality, the roots of which could be detected during Communism. Most notably, however, has been the emergence of mass poverty where large sections of the population have experienced increased rates of absolute and relative poverty. In the immediate post 1989 crisis of Eastern Europe, the emphasis of poverty analysis was primarily on the rapid rise of unemployment and sharp drops in income. More recently, however, the language of analysis has subtly shifted towards the idea of social exclusion, where transition analysts are referring more and more to this particular discourse (if not always explicitly, or indeed consciously). This can be detected at a rhetorical level in the choice of language and terminology being adopted in transition analyses even with those on the 'left' of the political spectrum. Fraser for example concludes in his discussion of the 'post-socialist' age that entire groups are, "being confined to undesirable or poorly paid work or being denied access to income-generating labour altogether."[127]

[127] N. Fraser, "From Redistribution to Recognition: Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Post-Socialist' Age", *New Left Review*, 212, July/August, 1995. p. 70.

The increasing tendency towards ideas of 'isolation' and 'denied access' is also apparent in official documents. A 1997 UNDP Human Development Report on Sofia in Bulgaria, for example, signals a shift away from an exclusive focus on poverty to one that incorporates ideas of 'social isolation' and 'cultural decline'. In a section entitled "Poverty and Social Isolation" a number of groups are identified as 'risk groups', including the unemployed, single mothers and the disabled.[128] At the ground level researchers are more explicitly applying ideas of social exclusion to the East European context. For example, in a paper presented at the University of Sussex Spring Term Seminar Series, Darwin examined the trends in child poverty in Eastern Europe using a social exclusion approach.[129]

In Eastern Europe, too, various reports and analyses are emerging that attempt to understand and explain changing papers of social inequality in terms of social exclusion. For example, a report by the European Roma Rights Center (ERRC) (an international NGO based in Hungary) on the plight of Gypsies in Slovakia since 1989 discusses the problems they face in terms of linguistic and geographical exclusion.[130] They raise the important point that the use of the Romani language in mainstream schooling is not seen as an important issue despite the recent change in law (adopted by the Slovak Parliament in 1995), which renders null and void Article 34 (2) on the use of minority languages for those who exceed 20 per cent in a given town or village. This had at least guaranteed, if only in principle, the right of a minority to use their language in official communications but has since become unenforceable (as from January 1996).

They also address the geographical location of Gypsies as evidence of their exclusion where most are to be found on the outskirts of built up areas often living in very poor conditions. They outline three post-Communist trends that have contributed to this: Gypsies are now blocked from joining new patterns of migration toward potential

---

[128] UNDP, *Sofia - Human Development Report,* UNDP, Sofia, 1997.

[129]Judith Darwin, "Child Poverty and Social Exclusion in Eastern Europe", *University of Sussex Spring Term Seminar Series*, 1997. IDS, Report on Seminar Series Web site <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/research/food/ povsem8.html> (accessed November 1998).

[130] ERRC, C. Cahn and N. Trehan, "Time of the Skinheads - Denial and Exclusion of Roma in Slovakia", *A Report of the European Roma Rights Center*, No. 3, Budapest, January, 1997. p. 18.

employment through the use of location-specific residence permits; there are mythical beliefs about Gypsies and housing where it is generally believed that they cannot cope in enclosed apartments; and Gypsies are being expelled from their homes by local and regional authorities. They offer a coherent argument that pinpoints the cause of the problems as lying at least partly in the practices of institutionalised racism. It could be argued therefore that the 'exclusion' argument adds little, if at all anything, to this analysis.

As in the West the strength of social exclusion analysis is seen as lying in its emphasis on 'multiple deprivation' in terms of it covering social, economic, political and cultural dimensions of inequality.[131] Rodgers, an advocate of social exclusion theory, argues that the turn towards social exclusion is a necessary response to the inadequacies of even those agencies which are more critical of traditional anti-poverty programmes, such as the ILO,

> *although much ILO work is critical of the current orthodoxy which argues that poverty can be alleviated by investment in human capital, economic growth via market forces and modest safety nets for those falling by the way side, no comprehensive macro-development strategy has been devised for poverty reduction.*[132]

He argues that it is possible to build into the existing growth path the types of jobs to which the poor can gain access. In the light of over all economic decline, however, where no sectors have been totally immune, the strategy of social inclusion becomes less convincing. Ultimately, by locating the solution to poverty in the inclusion of 'poverty groups' into the transition process, his criticism, like that of the ILO, only goes so far as to address, "the kind of adjustment pursued rather than adjustment *per se*".[133]

In the context of 'transition' social exclusion analysis is still fairly tentative and rests on a mixture of traditional indicators, such as long term unemployment, food consumption, and housing, and so-called 'new' dimensions such as degrees of social and political

---

[131] See for example Colin Lawson, "Book Review - Economic Transition and Social Exclusion in Russia", *Journal of European Social Policy,* 8 (1), 1998. p. 95.

[132] G. Rodgers, "Poverty: Old Problems, New Strategies", *World of Work*, 7, March, 1994. p. 17.

[133] Sunhil Guha, "Can Structural Adjustment Overcome Unemployment?", *World of Work*, 10, December, 1994. p. 8.

participation. This is particularly significant in the light of moves taken by Western institutions to tackle low levels of conventional political participation as a formal response to problems of social exclusion. A number of USAID funded projects have been introduced to nurture a 'civil society' and enhance participation, which, shrouded in a language of neutrality, offer no explicit references to any specific 'excluded groups'. A project which covered Eastern Europe and a number of CIS countries entitled *Support to Political and Social Aspects of the Democratic Process* was carried out between 1991 and 1996. Its chief donor was the US with $24,897,000 and it claimed to provide "support in institutionalising the democratic process, including election-related support, assistance to a broad range of democratic political parties, support to Trade Unions, and assistance to a citizens' network of NGOs involved in the democratic process."[134]

Tchernina's analysis of social exclusion in Russia takes a different approach. Although her study is mainly concerned with a Siberian city and some of its surrounding villages, its approach reveals an overall shift in analysis of the 'transition' in the former Soviet bloc away from poverty towards towards concepts of exclusion. Her argument rests on the idea that a core-periphery labour market has emerged during transition where those on the periphery are increasingly impoverished. In particular, she notes four 'distinctive properties' of social exclusion in the context of transition: the quick dismantling of the old society; mass impoverishment; the adherence of some social groups to former socialist values; and the inadequate functioning of social protection institutions.[135] Although all of these features are indeed real, the extent to which they represent the causes of social exclusion as opposed to the symptoms is not self-evident.

Her discussion extends to an examination of some of the survival strategies of the 'excluded', such as taking up multiple jobs in the informal sector; broadening work capacity; explicit 'non-market' behaviour; and, in the case of the elderly, drawing on

---

[134] United States Agency for International Development (USAID), *SEED Report: Monitoring Country Progress in Central and Eastern Europe,* 1996. USAID Homepage: <http://www.info.usaid.gov/> (accessed July 1998)

[135] Natalia Tchernina, *Economic Transition and Social Exclusion in Russia,* Research Series 108, International Institute for Labour Studies and UNDP, Geneva, 1996. p. 2.

family reserves and help from relatives and the state.[136] In this respect, her work makes valid points about the nature of social inequality during the transition. However, if compared with existing research on poverty in Russia, such as that of McAuley who discusses absolute and relative poverty coupled with needs-based and rights-based deprivation, the added depth of social exclusion analysis becomes less clear.[137] It could be argued that her concept of social exclusion simply describes in a different way already existing problems of unemployment and poverty.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter has revealed some of the complexities of analysing and understanding social inequality during the transition. There is a clear link between the types of inequality that existed during Communism and the 'new' forms of social inequality that have emerged since 1989. Macroeconomic decline, coupled with rising unemployment, has reinforced latent social inequalities and posed a huge burden on already dwindling welfare resources. The emergence of poverty groups, most of whom are defined as falling outside of the system altogether has encouraged social exclusion theorists in the West to apply their thinking to the 'transition'. However, rather than leading to the development of long term thinking in terms of structural causes of social inequality, it has served to encourage and justify the implementation of short-term protective measures aimed at 'including' excluded groups, whether it be in terms of finding work for the 'genuine' unemployed, or improving targeting for the 'undeserving' poor.

It appears that there is much in common between social exclusion theorists and transition analysts. It is certainly no coincidence that the theory of social exclusion has gained considerable credibility and political currency since the collapse of the Soviet regimes and the onset of market reform. The rationale behind the popular interpretation of the transition as an indicator of the 'triumph of liberal democracy', and so the end of history,

---

[136] Tchernina, *op. cit.*

[137] Alistair McAuley, "Inequality and Poverty." In D. Lane (ed.) *Russia in Transition - Politics, Privatisation and Inequality*, Longman, London, 1995.

and the current usage of social exclusion theory to explain widening inequality and increasing poverty, are both a product of the move away from class analysis.

Both 'end of history' and 'social exclusion' theorists argue that class is no longer a relevant indicator of development and social inequality. The former's argument is expressed in terms of the triumph of one order over its only possible alternative representing the apparent end of ideology, and the latter's is in terms of its evasive articulation of multiple varieties and 'sources' of exclusion. Neither of these approaches seem to offer much potential for a coherent critical vision of the society in which we live. Transition analysts run the risk of removing from focus the connection between the political, economic and social factors of pre-1989 Eastern Europe and those that have featured since 1989. Likewise, social exclusion theorists and their emphasis on the 'excluded' may encourage further the shift away from structural explanations of the causes of social inequality that, during the transition lie much deeper than mere side effects of market reform.

CHAPTER 4

GYPSIES AND OFFICIAL POLICY IN EASTERN EUROPE

4.1 Introduction

The preliminary analysis of patterns of social inequality during the transition has raised a number of important questions about its causes and the implications these have for policy responses built around social exclusion. This chapter takes the analysis of social exclusion further by examining the official policy approaches towards Gypsies in Eastern Europe and in particular Bulgaria in its various phases of development from the Ottoman empire up until the present day. Since Gypsies, more than most groups, have been labelled as marginalised, or as suffering from 'social exclusion' and, significantly, are also defined as at least partly excluding themselves, they represent a valuable test group in the discussion on social exclusion.

The question of Gypsy oppression inevitably falls into wider debates about racism and its origins. Hancock writing on Gypsy identity recognises the link between racism and Gypsy prejudice, but also draws on a number of other possibilities:

> *the association of Roma with the Islamic takeover of parts of the Christian world; color prejudice, specifically the association of darkness with sin; the exclusionary nature of Romani culture [...]; the unchallenged function of the 'gypsies' as a population upon which mainstream notions of immorality and lawlessness can be projected and thereby serve to define that mainstream's own boundaries; the fact that Roma have no territorial, military, political, or economic strength [...]; and the fact that the 'gypsy' persona has an - again unchallenged - ongoing function as a symbol of a simpler, freer time, a representative that is becoming more and more attractive in an increasingly complex and regimented world.*[1]

The question of the origins of racism has been subject to much debate. The most significant of which has been the argument made by a number of commentators that its origins are more than is often imagined, and that racism as we know it today is primarily

[1] Ian Hancock, "The Struggle for the Control of Identity", *Transitions*, 4 (4), September 1997. p. 37.

a product of modern capitalist societies.[2] If we take Callinicos's definition of racism of when, "a group of people is discriminated against on the basis of characteristics which are held to be inherent in them as a group", then it is possible to distinguish between the general fear and suspicion of strangers characteristic of early responses towards Gypsies and the more formal state response later developed towards them. In contrast to a fear of difference, modern racism rests on the conviction that, "a certain category of human beings cannot be incorporated into the rational order, whatever the effort."[3] Ultimately in order for racism to thrive human beings must be divided into groups on the basis of socially constructed categories and those characteristics which justify discrimination are then held to be inherent to the oppressed group.

A number of 'characteristics' have become associated with Gypsies that are linked with negative behaviour, which in turn are defined as inherent to them. Clébert, writing some thirty five years ago, described some key elements of these stereotypes, which are just as prevalent today, not only in France but across Europe,

> *The public has grown into the habit of abusively describing, in France for example, as gitans [sic] [...], all those people who live a nomad life, who live in caravans, have swarthy complexions, and whose women wear multi-coloured dresses, and who in short, tell fortunes and live on the fringe of society.*[4]

The combination of mythical, romantic imagery and demeaning, negative portrayals of Gypsies has helped form an artificial division between the 'genuine Romany' and the 'bogus Gypsy', allowing for distinctions to be drawn between those Gypsies who deserve recognition and those who do not.[5] Liégeois too, draws on the dangers of this dichotomy, which he argues, "is constantly played with, as the reality is squeezed out by

---

[2] Alex Callinicos, *Race and Class*, Bookmarks, London, 1993.
[3] Z. Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cambridge, 1991, quoted in Callinicos, *ibid.* p. 19.
[4] Jean-Paul Clébert, *The Gypsies*, Vista Books, London, 1963. p. xviii.
[5] This has taken on particular significance in the light of more recent fears of immigration in Western Europe.

the fun folklore of the operetta Gypsy and the disturbing nomadic life of the misinterpreted real-life Gypsy."[6] Sibley locates this mythical construction of the Gypsy as central to the conservation of dominant values;

> *[The] possibility that the characterisation of social groups, like Gypsies, may be based on myth is rarely considered, particularly in government circles, probably because these myths are functional, they serve to define the boundaries of the dominant system.*[7]

It is possible to explore the causes of Gypsy oppression along a number of lines, economic, political, social, and cultural. The emergence of capitalism in the sixteenth century and its implications for the building of nation-states has been identified by Acton as one of the prime causes for the development of specific anti-Gypsy based state policies in Europe.[8] Acton identifies a direct link between the emergence of agricultural capitalism with its features of private ownership and wage labour and a state campaign aimed at the eradication of the 'Gypsy problem'. From this time, Gypsies became the target of policies aimed at either their systematic integration, assimilation or banishment en masse.[9] Acton describes this period of history as the first attempted genocide of Gypsies in that by the mid-sixteenth century there were laws in many countries across Europe that made it a capital offence merely to be a Gypsy. For Acton this was not 'some private Gypsy tragedy', but part of the general economic and political history of Europe, and indeed, "the defining *rite de passage* in the maturation of the European nation-state."[10]

---

[6] Jean-Pierre Liégeois, "Introductory Report", *Gypsies in the Locality*, Proceedings Report on the Colloquy held in Slovakia 15-17 October 1992, Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1994. p. 15.

[7] Quoted by Ian Hancock, "The Roots of Inequity: Romani Cultural Rights in their Historical and Social Contexts", *Immigrants and Minorities*, 2 (1), March, 1992. p. 9

[8] Thomas Acton, "Authenticity, Expertise, Scholarship and Politics: Conflicting Goals in Romani Studies", *Inaugural Lecture Series*, The University of Greenwich, June, 1998.

[9] Jean-Pierre Liégeois and Nicolae Gheorghe, *Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority*, MRG International Report, 4, 1994. pp. 8-10

[10] Acton, *op. cit.* pp. 7 -8.

A slightly different approach regarding the rise of nations is that offered by Gellner. He tracks the rise of the 'nation' as a socio-economic unit as primarily a product of modernisation. He argues that the modern economy required a powerful, centralised state and that the state, in turn, required, "the homogenous cultural branding of its flock" for greater efficiency, which wielded with it the need to articulate a new sense of national consciousness.[11] Chaliand, taking elements from both capitalist and modernisation schools of thought, argues that up until the formation of the 'nation-state' the question of 'minorities' as a political issue was of minor importance and, if anything, it was the religious differentiation that mattered most.[12] The construction of the 'nation-state', and the advent of centralised government within strict political boundaries, then led to minorities becoming affairs of the state and representing to those in power 'problems' that were in essence political.[13] Mullerson, too, drawing on this idea of nation-state identity but in special reference to Eastern Europe argues that, "the attitude of states to minorities depends to a great extent on whether the authorities see in the minorities a threat to their national unity and territorial integrity."[14] The development of the 'nation-state', therefore, had huge implications for how 'outsiders', and in this case, Gypsies, were received by European societies at that time.

4.2 Early experiences of Gypsies in Eastern Europe

Linguistic, historical and anthropological research has generally been taken to show that Gypsies originated in northern India. Agreement over the date of their first arrival into south Eastern Europe is not so conclusive and estimates range from the ninth and tenth centuries to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, reaching the rest of Europe, it is

---

[11] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1983. p. 140.

[12] Gerard Chaliand (ed.), *Minority Peoples in the Age of Nation-States*, Pluto Press, London, 1989.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] Rein Mullerson, "Minorities in Eastern Europe and the Former USSR: Problems, Tendencies and Protection", *The Modern Law Review*, 56, 1993. pp. 796-7.

believed, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[15] Unlike the emerging capitalist countries in the Western part of Europe, countries in Eastern Europe were still largely organised around a feudal type of economy. This maintained the need for a large, coerced labour force, which took various forms of servitude and in most extreme cases entailed the collective and hereditary enslavement of Gypsies.[16] The process of Gypsy sedentarisation therefore began much earlier in Eastern Europe than it did in the West.

The late development of capitalism in the countries of Eastern Europe during the nineteenth century created a specific set of circumstances whereby the process of nation-building had to be done in a relatively short period of time and with societies that were essentially heterogeneous. The countries of Eastern Europe were made up of a vast mosaic of languages and ethnic groups and were not conducive to a smooth evolution of national identities or the articulation of clear cut nation-states. The emerging nation-state framework proved least compatible with the Gypsy populations of Eastern Europe.

Gypsies posed a series of problems to the developing capitalist nation-state structure in two fundamental ways. First, their visible difference in appearance and ethnic identity did not easily fit into the homogenising process required for the effective process of nation-building. Their potential alliance with other minorities, coupled with fears about their high birth rate served to aggravate a general suspicion of Gypsies. Second, their itinerant work patterns and nomadic lifestyle did not conform to, and could be seen to pose a threat to, principles of private ownership and wage-labour. Nomadism has over time been defined as unproductive and primitive and has been traditionally associated with crime, marginality and poverty. Travelling communities as a result have been

---

[15] Okely belongs to the school of thought which does not agree with this Indian origin thesis, instead arguing that the origins of Gypsies are diverse and from within as well as outside of European lands: Judith Okely, *The Traveller Gypsies,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983.

[16] Ian Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1987.

stigmatised as disorderly and anti-social.[17] The nature of their nomadic tradition and its association with primitive cultures and non-production appeared to clash most visibly with the modernising imperative of capitalism.

The element of threat associated with Gypsy communities, embodied most notably in their nomadic tradition, informed a uniform approach towards Gypsies across Europe insofar as there has been a common emphasis on some form of enforced sedentarisation. The clash between the nation-state and the Gypsy population was revealed most sharply during the Communist period in the countries of Eastern Europe. Despite a general consensus over the need to eradicate the 'Gypsy way of life' it is important to consider the development of individual state policies towards Gypsies even within the Communist bloc.

4.3 Gypsies and Communism

The population of Gypsies in Eastern Europe at the onset of Communist rule was certainly a reduced one, especially in East Germany and Poland. During the Second World War, Gypsies in Eastern Europe like the Jews had been subject to the ultimate racist campaign of extermination. From 1941 onwards Gypsies found in territories occupied by Germany were simply shot. In 1942-1943 Gypsies and those of mixed race were interned in Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau and Buchenwald.[18] Kenrick and Puxon calculated that nearly 220,000 Gypsies had died in Nazi concentration camps. Liegéois argues that the figure was much higher, estimating that some 350,000 to 500,000 Gypsies had been killed, either when they were found, or later in concentration camps.[19]

---

[17] Lucaseen draws attention to some of the problems with these types of analyses that altogether ignore the fact that migrant labour is a widespread phenomenon and that it plays a central role within the labour market and mainstream economic activity. Leo Lucassen, "A Blind Spot: Migratory and Travelling Groups in Western European Historiography", *International Review of Social History*, 38, 1993.

[18] Liégeois and Gheorghe, *op. cit.* p. 9.

[19] Quoted in UNHCR, Mark Braham, *The Untouchables - A Study of the Roma People of Central and Eastern Europe,* A Report to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 1993. p. 4.

With the post-war Communist take over in these countries, reformers had hoped also to make Gypsies disappear but through social and cultural assimilation, rather than genocide. Comparatively, this seemed to offer better immediate prospects for Gypsies. However, it would soon become apparent that Gypsies would also pose a specific problem to the Communist mode of development.[20]

One of the main appeals of the Soviet empire lay in its claim and at first its apparent ability to effectively modernise and homogenise at a relatively quick pace the diverse countries of Eastern Europe. As Stewart writes, "what better proof could there be of the power of the Communist method of social transformation than the disappearance of the Gypsies?"[21] Despite its rhetoric of international socialism, Communist policy in the countries of Eastern Europe was very much concerned with nationalistic modernisation. This shaped a contradictory policy framework throughout Communist Eastern Europe. At the formal level the Communist ideology appealed to universal truths of equality and social justice, yet in practice it rested on implicit nationalism, structural inequality and systematic exploitation.

It is within this context of rapid nationalistic modernisation that the 'backward' or 'primitive' element of Gypsy culture, such as nomadism took on particular resonance. Gypsies and their different attitudes towards wealth, work and good housekeeping were

---

[20] Asking the question 'why is the Gypsy the scapegoat and not the Jew?', Kenedi, in reference to Communist Hungary, argues that while anti-Semitism was universal, anti-Gypsy prejudice was the specific 'folly' of the socialist system. In a system that prohibited political thinking other than within the prescribed ideology, and which rested on social cohesion, anti-Gypsy prejudice, rather than anti-Semitism, provided an accessible route for people to transform frustration into aggression without directly attacking the actual causes of this frustration and without running risk of it slipping into a political dimension: "*people did not argue about whether the gigantic investments by the state are justified or how large the military budget might be. They are not looking for causation and responsibility in economic policy-making [...]. Seeing that the cognitive dissonance cannot be eased by criticism of official policies and that the lack of perspectives leading to any change in the system impedes any hope for transforming the tension for the future, only the Gypsies can be the target*". Janos Kenedi, "Why is the Gypsy the Scapegoat and not the Jew?" *East European Reporter*, 2 (1), 1986. pp. 11-12.

[21] Michael Stewart, *The Time of the Gypsies*, Westview Press, Oxford, 1997. p. 5.

considered as a major obstacle to the drive of modernisation that characterised the ethos of Soviet Communism. In the name of mass industrialisation and social transformation Communist governments saw it as necessary to 'raise' Gypsies into the working class by effectively mobilising them into the 'socialist work ethic' through fixed employment: "By finding their place in the proletariat, the Gypsies would find their place at the heart of social life; their age-old exclusion would cease, and so would their distinct identity and lifestyle."[22]

In other fields, policy approaches towards Gypsies were also heavily paternalistic and marked a distinct concern with total assimilation. In Poland, for example, where most of its Gypsy population had perished during the holocaust, the new Communist government could more justifiably than most claim that it could build "a nationally and ethnically homogeneous state".[23] It was the first post-war Communist state to try and integrate Gypsies voluntarily. However it later adopted more coercive methods. Indeed, references to 'Polonization' can be found in the literature of this period where although Gypsies represented only a small proportion of the population, it was still seen as imperative to find ways to assimilate them through the eradication of nomadism.[24] During the early 1950s, cultural activities were also targeted, but rather than banned altogether, they were instead state funded and closely monitored.[25] This, coupled with the prohibition of wandering Gypsy communities, and their coercion into permanent employment, was a clear initial attempt at *controlling* rather than eradicating central aspects of Gypsy culture.

---

[22] Stewart, *op. cit.* p. 6.

[23] Andrzej Mirga, "The Effects of State Assimilation on Polish Gypsies", *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society,* 3 (2), 1993. p. 69

[24] *Ibid;* Jerzy Ficowski *The Gypsies in Poland, History and Customs*, Interpress Publishers, Yugoslavia, 1990. pp. 38-48.

[25] Adam Bartosz, "La Communauté Rom en Pologne - La Situation Sociale et Politique", *Revue Française des Affaires Sociales,* 2, January/March, 1992. p. 132.

This coercive campaign of assimilation in Poland was characteristic of many countries in Eastern Europe. In Czechoslovakia, however, Ulc sees the development of policy towards Gypsies as being inconsistent in the first few decades of Communist rule, which he saw as consisting of "a blend of condescension and impatience, of benevolent inactivity and calls for radical solutions". Up until the mid-1950s, Gypsies in Czechoslovakia escaped any major policy drive and enjoyed relative freedom. The official assimilation campaign that began in 1958, marked a change in course however, with the introduction of a "Law of Assimilation." This encouraged an overall shift in attitude towards Gypsies, as embodied in the change in media representation of Gypsies, from positive to negative. This was partly a product of growing concerns over the apparent high birth rate of Gypsies. According to official estimates, in Eastern Slovakia, the annual increase of Gypsy population stood at a world record of 5 per cent.[26] This led to various claims such as in the German newspaper *Spiegel* that Czechoslovakia had become by 1968 'the fourth world Gypsy power', surpassed only by Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania and to further dramatic claims that by the turn of the twentieth century the number of Gypsies living in Czechoslovakia would have reached one million.[27]

The shift in policy approach towards Gypsies was also partly a product of the apparent movement of Slovak Gypsies into the Czech region. Their resettlement in the Czech lands into concentrated areas heightened concerns over the emergence of ghettos, which would, in the view of officials, "perpetuate the backward Gypsy way of life."[28] A law on permanent settlement was introduced in 1958 entitled 'Act on Permanent Settlement of

---

[26] Otto Ulc, "Communist National Minority Policy: The Case of the Gypsies in Czechoslovakia", *Soviet Studies*, 20 (4) 1964. p. 422.

[27] *Ibid.* pp. 421-422.

[28] *Práce mezi cikánskim obyvatelstvem,* UPV, Prague, 1959, quoted by Willy Guy, "Ways of Looking at Roms: The Case of Czechoslovakia", in F. Rehfisch (ed.) *Gypsies, Tinkers and Other Travellers*, Academic Press, London, 1975. p. 214.

Nomadic People', which required that all Gypsies be registered and suitable employment be found "towards the goal of their becoming orderly, toiling citizens."[29]

The timing of the campaign corresponded with the preparation in Czechoslovakia for the transition from a People's Republic to a Socialist Republic (declared in 1960), central to which was the perceived need for a cultural revolution. Based on this reasoning the government argued in reference to its Gypsy population that "we should never be able to proclaim that we had achieved a beneficent cultural revolution if we allowed thousands of our fellow creatures to live in a primitive way and without culture."[30] In 1961, therefore, the Party declared that it would "solve the Gypsy problem by 1970."[31] However, with enforced settlement and the subsequent growth of encampments, Gypsies simply became more visible.

Ultimately, the percentage of Gypsies engaged in permanent employment was still well below the average and data on education offered even more cause for concern. In the mid-1960s only 5 per cent of Gypsy children of East Slovakia were completing the eight years of compulsory education.[32] This served to highlight the apparent ineffectiveness of assimilative policies, which later led to more extreme, if not desperate, policy interventions. In 1967 a new programme of assimilation was declared that would rest on full employment and the dispersal of Gypsy hamlets. Running parallel to this was a more sinister campaign that aimed to directly counter the high birth rate of Gypsies. Evidence has recently come to light of encouraged or forced sterilisation and abortions for Gypsy

---

[29] Section 1 of the 'Act on Permanent Settlement of Nomadic People', quoted in Ulc, *op. cit.* p. 426.
[30] A radio announcement in Czechoslovakia as cited by Clébert, *op. cit.* p. 210.
[31] *Zdravotnické noviny*, 15 April 1961, quoted in Ulc, *op. cit.* p. 424.
[32] Taken from various official sources. Ulc, *ibid.* p. 430.

women in Czechoslovakia, performed in some cases without their knowledge or consent.[33]

Although respective governments carried out different degrees of assimilation, a general pattern of Communist policy can be detected. Some countries in Eastern Europe did at first recognise Gypsies as an ethnic group. However, the bulk of Communist policy rested on a definition of Gypsies as a social rather than ethnic group. Within the ideology of the post-war people's democratic state, Gypsies in the Eastern Bloc failed to fulfil the criteria of the Stalinist definition of a 'nation'. Developed from Stalin's original thesis in 1913 and adopted throughout Eastern Europe, the 'objective' criteria for a nation included: possession of a common origin; possession of its own language and territory; possession of common economic; psychological and cultural peculiarities.[34] Gypsies not fitting into this criteria were instead defined in terms of their lifestyle, religion or demographic structure, which enabled governments throughout Eastern Europe to justify more easily their harsh assimilative policies. At the same time it enabled the party to prevent Gypsies from consolidating some form of national or ethnic consciousness. In Hungary, for example, a formal policy statement of 1961 denied Gypsies the status of 'national minority', who, instead, were characterised by their 'way of life'. Likewise, Gypsies in Czechoslovakia were defined as a people "maintaining a markedly different demographic structure."[35] This served to underpin the crux of Communist policy aimed at the integration of Gypsies into a regular socialist wage-labour.[36]

---

[33] D. J. Kostelancik, "The Gypsies of Czechoslovakia: Political and Ideological Considerations in the Development of Policy", *Studies in Comparative Communism*, 22 (4), Winter, 1989. p. 316. Silverman notes that in 1987, 36.6 per cent of women who were sterilised were Rom, even though they represented only 2-3 per cent of the population. Carol Silverman, "Persecution and Politicisation: Roma (Gypsies) of Eastern Europe", *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Summer, 1995. p. 44.

[34] J.Stalin, *Marxism and the National Question*, (1913) Moscow: Progress, 1971. For a discussion of the relationship between Stalin's definition of nation and arguments about 'nation' and 'nation-building in Eastern Europe see, M.Haynes, 'Istorikut i ideyata za natsiyata', *Istoricheski pregled*, no. 5-6, 1998, pp. 218-236.

[35] Quoted in Ulc, *op. cit.* p. 425.

[36] Michael Stewart, "Gypsies, Work and Civil Society", *Journal of Communist Studies*, 6, June, 1990. pp. 141-42.

With the continuation in mainstream policy making of racist assumptions that had long been discredited in the West, policies of assimilation in Eastern Europe rarely reached their objective of total absorption. Rather than social assimilation for Gypsies, we saw increased social differentiation. The difficulties of integration were recognised to a certain extent by various Western commentators dealing with general issues of inequality and poverty. Matthews, for example, in his study of poverty during the Communist period acknowledged that, in Hungary, the Gypsy population (estimated at 320,000 in 1971), "cannot be easily integrated into a socialist economy."[37] Yet, this limited reference to Gypsies is as far as most general analyses go. While the emphasis should be on the question of *why* policies of assimilation are problematic, in mainstream literature, doubts extend only so far as to acknowledge the existence of problems. For example, the self-employed nature of traditional Gypsy occupations is often identified as incompatible with conventional employer-employee relations. This has led to the popular argument that Gypsy work is peripheral to the key processes of production. However, Stewart makes the point that Gypsy labour was an integral part of the working economy during Communism, most evident in their ability to 'job-hop'.[38]

Ultimately, policies of aggressive assimilation aggravated rather than harmonised ethnic relations within Eastern Europe. Liegeois and Gheorghe argue that policies of assimilation: have not led to integration nor harmonious co-existence but marginalisation; reinforce rejection as the main attitude of society towards Roma/Gypsies leading to conflict; and obscure reality by prejudice and stereotypes, which continue to shape how the majority relates to Roma/Gypsies.[39]

---

[37] Mervyn Matthews, *Poverty in the Soviet Union*, University of Cambridge Press, Cambridge, 1986. p. 165.
[38] Stewart, *op. cit.* 1990.
[39] Liégeois and Gheorghe, *op. cit.* p. 19.

One of the main reasons why assimilation did not always work was the respective Communist Parties' lack of knowledge about Gypsies and a total disregard for reality. Few background analyses were undertaken and few funds were allocated for settlement programmes. Furthermore, contrary to the official line, Gypsies did not represent an homogeneous group, but comprised of a multitude of ethnic groupings. This meant that Gypsy policies failed. Nomads were either put on the run, or forcibly settled into areas that had no basic infrastructure, so exacerbating rather than alleviating problems of poverty and social fragmentation.

4.4 Gypsies during the 'transition'

With the collapse of Communism in these countries new attempts were made to re-evaluate the 'Gypsy question'. Entering the Western world of human rights, governments and policy makers in Eastern Europe have been compelled to discuss the Gypsy question in a new language of minority rights and 'social integration'. However, in light of continued discrimination and heightened tensions between majority and Gypsy populations, it is increasingly apparent that this emerging discourse is one still informed by earlier assumptions of backwardness and instability associated with the Gypsy threat.

A profound misunderstanding of Gypsy communities still dominates official discourse regarding Gypsies in Eastern Europe, which is manifested most clearly with the problems encountered on measuring their numbers.[40] The most accepted estimate of Gypsy numbers in Europe is that offered by the Gypsy Research Centre, Rene Descartes University, Paris (see Table 4.1).[41] According to this source, Gypsies represent the

---

[40] See for example, Colin Clark "Counting Backwards: The Roma 'Numbers Game' in Central and Eastern Europe", *Radical Statistics*, 69, Autumn, 1998.

[41] These are the figures used by the Minority Rights Groups in their report on Roma/Gypsies in Europe. Liégeois and Gheorghe, *op. cit.*

largest ethnic minority in Europe numbering between 7,000,000 and 8,500,000 most of whom live in the Eastern part of Europe and, in particular, the Balkans. Official national estimates put the numbers of Gypsies at a much lower figure, which serves to highlight some of the methodological and political barriers, such as the types of definition and criteria used in collecting and presenting information, that continue to prevent the accurate measurement of Gypsy numbers.[42]

Table 4.1 Estimated Gypsy populations in a selection of European countries 1994 (min-max.).

Western Europe		East Central Europe		The Balkans	
France	280 – 340,000	**Czech Republic**	250 – 300,000	**Albania**	90 – 100,000
Germany	110 – 130,000	**Slovakia**	480 – 520,000	**Bulgaria**	700-800,000
Italy	90 – 110,000	**Hungary**	550 – 600,000	**Croatia**	30 – 40,000
Spain	650 – 800,000	**Poland**	50 – 60,000	**Macednia**	220 –260,000
Sweden	15 – 20,000	**Lithuania**	3 – 4,000	**Romania**	1,800 – 2 ,500,000
UK	90 – 120,000	**Slovenia**	8 – 10,000	**Serbia-Montenegro**	400 – 450,000

Source: Gypsy Research Centre, René Descartes Université, Paris, 1994.

The inconsistencies that arise when measuring the number of Gypsies in Europe in the 1990s are not so prevalent when assessing the degree of animosity towards them. Table 4.2 shows an overall dislike of Gypsies expressed by national majorities, and also gives an indication of the kind of negative traits that are commonly associated with them.[43] The distinction between the lower figures for both West and East Germany, coupled with

[42] Liebich notes two different types of problems: From above, such as amalgamation of separate groups, fragmentation of existing groups, invention of new ethnic designations, and omission of certain groups, most notoriously, that of Gypsies; and from below, such as the type of questions and instructions posed to the respondent, conflicting estimates based on incompatible definitions of minority groups between countries; voluntary concealment for self-protection, and indefinable identities, which may span more than one recognised category. Andre Liebich, "Minorities in Eastern Europe: Obstacles to a Reliable Count", *RFE/RL Research Report,* 1 (20), 15 May, 1992.

[43] A survey carried out in Slovakia in 1991 provides us with another example of the degree to which majority populations are suspicious of Gypsies. Out of over 2,000 Slovak respondents 768, that is 45,2 per cent, said they would like Gypsies to be removed from their area. Viera Bacová "HI'adanie rómskej identity", *Sociologia*, 23 (1-2), 1991. p. 141, Table 1.

Spain, and the much higher degrees of expressed animosity in the countries of Eastern Europe, give some indication of the different degrees of racism expressed by these two parts of Europe. Perhaps most significantly, these figures highlight that the Communist governments in Eastern Europe, far from solving the 'Gypsy problem', actually served to exacerbate it.

Table 4.2 Respondents who expressed negative sentiments towards Gypsies in West and East European countries, % 1991.[44]

Country	dislike Gypsies %
Czechoslovakia	91
Hungary	79
Bulgaria	71
Poland*	72
East Germany	57
West Germany	60
Spain	50

*Taken from a similar poll conducted in 1991: did not want Gypsies in their neighbourhood
Source: Times Mirror Centre, Washington, 1991.

More so than in the West, the general suspicion and fear of Gypsies in Eastern Europe is not formally associated with racism as such, in that Gypsies are not traditionally recognised as constituting a different 'race'.[45] Anti-Gypsy prejudice therefore, is seen as less controversial and one will find it expressed at every level of society, regardless of education or socio-economic status. The general sense of insecurity brought about by economic decline and the collapse of universal welfare has certainly contributed to increasing popular prejudice, in that Gypsies prove to be convenient scapegoats for a whole variety of social ills. In particular the widening divide between the majority and Gypsy population in terms of living standards, has fuelled further popular claims that Gypsies are simply 'living-off' already limited social security provision.

---

[44] Quoted in Martin Linton, "What Credo do Europeans Recite? Did the Worship of Lenin Destroy God in the East as Consumerism did in the West?", *The Guardian*, 4 October 1991. p. 21.

[45] In Czechoslovakia for example, it was believed that Gypsies were of the same Aryan stock as Slavs, and therefore did not constitute a separate racial group. *Reportér* (bi-weekly of the Union of Czechoslovak Journalists) 1966, no. 17. Quoted in Ulc, *op. cit.* p. 425.

Hockenos draws particular attention to the sharp growth of far right activities in the early years of transition, with specific reference to escalating violence towards Gypsy communities.[46] Drawing examples from the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Romania, he documents the rise in number of violent attacks on Gypsy communities. A PER policy paper on the overall situation of Gypsies across Europe highlights a number of factors to consider when analysing the rise of racially motivated violence:

> *political instability, economic crises, the weakened authority of the basic institutions of the state, and the growing right-wing tendencies based on the revival of nationalism [....] fuelled numerous cases of racially motivated violence and scapegoating against the most defenceless and despised segment of society: the Roma.*[47]

Racially motivated violence are the visible signs of a more general uneasiness being expressed by the majority population coupled with the continuation of racist institutions, such as the network of 'special' schools, that cater for 'socially retarded' children, consisting mainly of Gypsies.[48] Despite these visible signs of popular anti-Gypsy prejudice Liégeois sees the post-Communist period in Eastern Europe as a period of indecision on the part of official policy makers. Having lived through various stages of systematic policy, which he describes as exclusion, reclusion and inclusion, Gypsies, in

---

[46] Paul Hockenos, *Free to Hate - The Rise of the Right in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, Routledge, London, 1993.

[47] Andrzej Mirga and Nicolae Gheorghe, *The Roma in the Twentieth-First Century: A Policy Paper*, Project on Ethnic Relations, New Jersey, May 1997. p. 11.

[48] The use of long discredited concepts in mainstream discourse in Eastern Europe offers another example of the continuation of racists assumptions. Anthropologist and scientists still stress the importance of 'genetic pools', or the 'genetic history' of given peoples in order to understand their cultural behaviour. Kohn argues that the persistence of a pseudo scientific approach towards Gypsies is a result of the Romantic tradition in this part of Europe and its concern for finding unique spirits: 'Genes are the modern means of expressing this and its popular use was reinforced by the suppression of orthodox genetics by Stalin'. See for example, Viktor Bezverkhy's article on Gypsies and Jews in *Science*, 269, 7th July 1995, cited by Marek Kohn, *The Race Gallery*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1995. A number of other publications concerned with the genetic makeup of Gypsies have also been published in the West. Bereczkei, for example argues that the higher fertility rate of Gypsies in Eastern Europe is a 'racial' trait, which is then taken as having implications for an understanding of their higher degree of promiscuity. Tamas Bereczkei, "r-Selected Reproductive Strategies Among Hungarian Gipsies: A Preliminary Analysis, *Ethology and Sociobiology*, 14, 1993; Jan Kalanin, Yutaka Takarada et al. "Gypsy Phenylketonuria: A Point of Mutation of the Phenylalanine Hydroxylase Gene in Gypsy Families from Slovakia", *American Journal of Medical Genetics*, 49, 1994.

this period of indecision now have the chance to participate in the process of articulating more flexible practices.[49]

Prejudice, however, has managed to find a place in local policy making. In Czechoslovakia in 1993, for example, several cities passed ordinances that gave local authorities the right to evict 'troublesome Roma' from their apartments and expel them from the cities without court orders.[50] A draft law aimed specifically at controlling the migration of Gypsies submitted by the prosecutor-general to Czechoslovakia in 1992 is another example of policies targeted at Gypsies. Its primary concern was to deal with "unrest caused by undisciplined groups of migrants" who were identified as predominantly Gypsies.[51] As well as proactive policies aimed at Gypsies, authorities also perpetuate discrimination through inaction. Liégeois and Gheorghe, for example, observe that "[a] substantial proportion of discrimination is caused by the authorities themselves, which fail to penalize racist action against Roma/Gypsies."[52] Finally, the negative stereotyping of Gypsies is reinforced by public figures as well as the media, making it possible for political leaders to pronounce Gypsies "socially unadaptable" without fear of reproach.[53]

This rising anti-Gypsy prejudice in both formal and informal spheres, coupled with the rapidly declining social and economic conditions reveals the ambiguity behind the positive developments of economic and democratic reform, even in more 'progressive' countries like the Czech Republic. Within this overall pattern of growing tension between Gypsy and majority populations, it is possible to observe that there have also

---

[49] Liégeois, *op. cit.* 1994. pp. 14-15.

[50] Mirga and Gheorghe, *op. cit.* p. 221.

[51] Quoted by J. Pehe, "Law On Romanies Causes Uproar in Czech Republic", *RFE/RL Research Report,* 2 (7), 12 February, 1993. p. 18.

[52] Liégeois and Gheorghe, *op. cit.* p. 11.

[53] A term used by the Prime Minister of Slovakia in September 1993 in explicit reference to Gypsies at an impromptu address to members of his party, cited by Kohn, *op. cit.* p. 178.

been significant differences between countries in terms of their official policies towards Gypsies both during Soviet rule and since its collapse. One of the most visible disparities within Eastern Europe lies between the countries of Central Europe and those in the Balkan Peninsular. The Balkans is one of the most complex areas in Europe, in terms of its ethnic, linguistic and religious composition. Its geographic position is also significant, historically being vulnerable to invasion from the Asia Minor and Europe.[54] Bulgaria, which shares borders with Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Romania and Turkey, forms a central part of the Balkan peninsular, and contrasts with central European countries insofar as it represents a particular type of official policy shaped by the historical development of this region.

4.5 Gypsies and the process of nation-building in Bulgaria

The Bulgarian nation is one predominantly made up of ethnic Bulgarians. The Bulgars were originally a nomadic central Asian people who, in the seventh century conquered (and were later absorbed by) the resident Slavs in what is now present-day Bulgaria (formed from territories of the Ottoman Empire in 1878). Latest research shows that Gypsies could have first started arriving into this region as far back as the ninth and tenth centuries. Although the extact time of their arrival is still not known, it is generally believed that by the fourteenth century Gypsies in the Balkans were a well established community.[55] Contemporary Bulgaria is generally considered to consist of four main ethno-cultural groups: Bulgarians, Turks, Pomaks (Bulgarian Mohammedans) and Gypsies. The first three categories are defined in terms of linguistic and religious differences: Bulgarian-speaking Christians are Bulgarian, Turkish-speaking Muslims are

---

[54] Hugh Poulton, *The Balkans - Minorities and States in Conflict*, Minority Rights Publications, London, 1991.

[55] Carol Silverman, "Bulgarian Gypsies: Adaptation in a Socialist Context", *Nomadic Peoples*, 21/22, 1986; Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, "Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria - Literacy, Policy and Community Development (1985-1995)", *Alpha*, UNESCO, Institute for Education, 1997; and George C. Soulis, "The Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire and the Balkans in the Late Middle Ages", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 15, 1961.

Turks, Bulgarian-speaking Muslims are Pomaks.[56] In contrast, Gypsies form essentially heterogeneous groups in linguistic, ethnic and religious terms. Although not forming an homogenous whole, Gypsies are grouped as the second largest minority in Bulgaria. It is also possible to identify a number of other smaller minority groups living within Bulgarian borders: Armenians, Tartars, Jews, Macedonians, Romanians, Greeks and others.[57]

The Bulgarian nation is a relatively recent formation, marked by its liberation from Ottoman rule in 1878, and then formal independence in 1908. Historically, Gypsies in Bulgaria have experienced three main phases of development that have involved, to varying degrees, processes of nation building triggered by the end of Ottoman rule, pronounced nationalism, and gradual integration into the Western economy. The first major phase of development can be stemmed back to the Ottoman empire. The empire spanned large parts of South Eastern Europe for nearly 500 years, from 1453 up until the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78. The second phase of development began with the liberation of Bulgaria in 1878 and lasted up until 1946 when the Bulgarian Communist Party assumed control. The third phase was the period of Communist rule which maintained control for over 40 years until its collapse in 1989.

Information on Gypsies during the Ottoman Empire is largely in the form of detailed tax registers recorded by central and local administrations. The main thrust of Ottoman policy towards Gypsies was one concerned with the collection of taxes, an obligation to which all Gypsies, regardless of faith, were required to fulfil. They had a special status under Ottoman rule and were officially defined according to their ethnic origin. Gypsies

---

[56] Pomaks are estimated to number in excess of 250,000 (a figure was given by local authorities at the end of 1990 which stood at 268,971). Poulton, *op. cit.* pp. 111-118.

[57] Other minorities include: ethnic Albanians, Cherkez (Mongols - an Islamic group from the Ottoman Empire, who have become totally assimilated by the Turks), Vlahs (a pastoral people who live south of the Danube and speak a form of Romanian) and Sarakatsani (transhumant shepherds who share many traits with the Vlahs). *Ibid.*

as a separate ethnic group, failed to fit into the categories of the *faithful* (a Muslim subject of the Empire) and the *rayah* (a non-Muslim subject of the Empire). Their religion did matter in other ways however, in that all interactions between Christian and Muslim Gypsies were banned. Although being Muslim was not enough to secure Gypsies the 'faithful' status under the Empire, it sufficed to distinguish them from other Christian Gypsies.[58]

Officially, Gypsies were not persecuted under the Empire, which meant that, ironically, their situation compared favourably with the situation for Gypsies in the West at this time. There is some evidence of Gypsy slavery (despite there being no official recognition of this) under the Ottoman empire. Yet at the same time, this region represented a safe haven for many slaves fleeing the neighbouring principalities of Wallachia and Moldovia.[59] The relative protection offered under this regime, meant that many Gypsies decided to settle there during this period. It was during this period that the system of living in ethnic quarters was established forming the basis for the Gypsy quarters, or *mahalas,* that still exist today in Bulgaria. However, many of these Gypsy communities still maintained their traditional occupations and crafts. Although information was scarce many others continued to lead nomadic lifestyles. What was also possible to discern was that, within the Ottoman Empire the settled Gypsy populations were largely concentrated in the present day Bulgarian lands.[60]

Bulgaria's liberation from the Ottoman Empire in 1878, was marked with the end of the Russo-Turkish war (1877-1878) and the signing of the Treaty of San Stefano on 3 March. Initially, this Treaty made Bulgaria one of the largest states in South Eastern

---

[58] Marushiakova and Popov, "Gypsy Minority", *op. cit.* pp. 18-20.
[59] *Ibid.* pp. 20-23; Angus Fraser "The Rom Migrations" *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 2 (2), 1992.
[60] *Ibid.*

Europe incorporating Macedonia and parts of Thrace within its borders. However, later that year the Berlin Congress ruled that Bulgaria be partitioned into three separate states. First there was the Principality which maintained its independence. Second, was the newly created Eastern Rumelia covering southern Bulgaria including Plovdiv, which was subordinated to the Empire. The third partition which included parts of Macedonia and Thrace received the worst deal in that its independence was totally relinquished and it was once again brought under Turkish control. Bulgaria was thus reduced to a principality encompassing the northern region of Bulgaria between the Danube and the Balkan range including the Sofia region.

In 1885 however the principality was re-united with Eastern Rumelia and in 1908 the Bulgarian Principality was internationally recognised as a Kingdom, forming the Bulgarian state as we know it today. The process of creating a national identity was therefore rather a complex and belated one compared with the other more advanced countries of Europe. Bulgaria faced the dual task of uniting all those Bulgarians within its borders plus claims that substantial parts of the Bulgarian nation were still outside of the new Bulgarian borders. It had to embark on a nation-building programme that would be both swift and decisive. This was the context from which grew more aggressive policies directed towards both Turks and Gypsies.

Initially, the prime focus of nation-building was to tackle the legacy of Ottoman rule via the idea of 'liberation from the Turkish Yoke.' National campaigns were sporadic and mainly rooted in local or religious initiatives and official polices directed specifically towards Gypsies were, at this stage, few and far between. With the re-drawing of the borders, the emphasis was, at first, on unifying all those Bulgarians who found themselves outside Bulgarian borders. The identification and drawing together of all

Bulgarians were seen as more important for the realisation of its 'national ideals' than the relative 'minor significance' of the Gypsy population.[61]

Post-liberation Bulgarian nation-building was, therefore, largely concerned with disassociating itself from the Ottoman empire. This period has been characterised by Neuberger as a "Balkan anti-Turkish campaign based on existing ancient enmities between these two groups". However, "these purportedly *ancient* Balkan enmities were constructed within the Bulgarian nationalist elite's appropriation of inherently ambiguous Western Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment concepts of nationhood". The use of 'Enlightenment' European conceptual tools of toleration carried with it, she argues, "the assumed superiority of Europe and the Christian world over the 'Oriental Barbarism' of the Bulgarian Ottoman past."[62]

As well as the heavy anti-Turkish component to post-liberation nation building, there was also the drive towards improving national literacy rates. Mishkova examines the phenomenon of literacy growth in Bulgaria during the period between 1878-1912, and shows how it was seen as a vehicle for nation building where, "literacy in Bulgaria" she argues "had almost the sole expression of the nation's efforts to elevate its cultural standards". [63] Indeed, during this period, overall literacy rates doubled from about 20 per cent in 1893 to over 40 per cent in 1912. However, Table 4.3 shows that when broken down into ethnic groups we see an entirely different picture. Gypsies and Turks remained largely illiterate, where in 1900 the literacy rate for Gypsies was a fraction of the average rate at 1.9 per cent.[64]

---

[61] Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Gypsies (Roma) in Bulgaria*, Studien zur Tsganelogi und Folklovistik 18, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 1997. p. 174.
[62] Mary Neuberger, "Bulgaro-Turkish Encounters and the Re-Imaging of the Bulgarian Nation (1878-1995)", *East European Quarterly*, 31 (1), March, 1997. pp. 1-4.
[63] Diana Mishkova, "Literacy and Nation-Building in Bulgaria 1878 -1912", *East European Quarterly*, 29 (1), Spring, 1994. p. 79.
[64] *Ibid.*

Table 4.3 Male/female literacy rates by nationalities (mother tongue) of the whole population over the age of six, %, 1900

Nationality	Males	Females	Total
Greek	55.1	24.0	40.0
Bulgarian	52.8	16.0	34.5
Romanian	27.6	3.5	15.8
Turkish	8.3	2.2	5.3
Gypsy	3.6	0.2	1.9

Source: census data, Mishkova.

Nevertheless, the Gypsy population as a whole was fairly stable and had carved out a well defined economic niche maintaining a certain degree of separateness.[65] Some Bulgarian Gypsies had long been deeply integrated in the social and economic structure of Bulgarian society. The first Bulgarian factory was opened at the end of the nineteenth century in the town of Sliven and Gypsies were its first labourers. Sliven became the centre of the textile industry of which Gypsies comprised an important part.[66] However, popular mistrust of Gypsies coupled with Bulgaria's continued search for a 'pure' national identity combined to create a specific set of circumstances that led to dramatic attempts at total assimilation. It seems that the objectives of achieving national homogeneity simply encouraged Bulgarians to view those who did not immediately fit, such as Gypsies, as inhabiting a separate place: "in the eye of the Bulgarian they were already unequal, inferior, second-rate."[67]

This view of Gypsies as inherently inferior was reinforced by the idea that they posed a major obstacle to the consolidation of a unified Bulgarian nation-state. At the turn of the century moves were taken to restrict the voting rights of Gypsies with the implementation of a Law for Amendment of the Electoral Law. Non-Christian Gypsies,

[65] Silverman, *op. cit.* 1986. p. 52

[66] Marushiakova and Popov, *Gypsies (Roma), op. cit.* p. 33. By 1887, according to an official census, Gypsies in Bulgaria amounted to about 57,000 and over 1,000 had settled permanently in Sliven (the latter figure is according to an official census taken in 1874).

[67] *Ibid.* p. 174.

and all those Gypsies 'who cannot establish residence' were not allowed to vote.[68] This provoked an immediate response and the first Gypsy conference was organised in Vidin in 1901. A petition was drawn up and handed to the National Assembly in 1905. The lack of response, led to the organisation of the first Gypsy Congress in Sofia in December 1905. Having attracted international attention, the Bulgaria National Assembly finally conceded and voted in a new Electoral Law. This removed earlier restrictions on the voting rights of Gypsies.[69] The ability of Gypsies to organise and protest revealed the extent to which they had secured a firm place within Bulgarian society and politics.

In the light of such events, Gypsy populations at this time were increasingly subject to various kinds of investigation and, in particular, ethnographic interest. These were concerned with investigating the 'real' Gypsy through linguistic analysis and occupational research.[70] In Bulgaria, this growing interest in 'other' ethnic cultures served to fuel concerns over the difficult process of forming an homogeneous national identity. The uneven pattern of demographic growth, and in particular, the growing demographic weight of Gypsies has, over time, heightened concerns among officials about the 'Gypsy problem'. However, Table 4.4 shows that this fear of a growing Gypsy population was largely unfounded.[71]

---

[68] The voting on this law was almost unanimous - 90 of the 96 deputies present voted *for* it. Marushiakova and Popov, *Gypsies (Roma), op. cit.* pp. 29-30.

[69] Donald Kenrick, "History of Bulgarian Roma/Gypsies", *Occassional Paper of the Romany Institute*, (date unknown).

[70] Silverman, *op. cit,* 1986. This trend is not exclusive to Bulgaria, the same level of interest in Rom linguistics was evident in the USA. For example, the setting up of the Gypsy Lore Society in 1888 was founded on earlier philological studies on Roma that flourished during the 1860s and 1870s. Angus Fraser, "A Rum Lot", in Matt. T. Salo, *100 Years of Gypsy Studies,* 5, The Gypsy Lore Society, Cheverly, Maryland, 1990.

[71] Kiril Donkov, "Etnichiat surstav na naselenueto na Bulgaria" (The Ethnic Composition of the Bulgarian Population"), *Statistika*, 2, 1994.

Table 4.4 The population in Bulgaria according to ethnic groups between 1880-1992.[72]

Year	Total (100%)	Bulgarian	%	Turkish	%	Gypsy	%	Others	%
1880*	815,951	589,797	(72,3)	158,463	(19,4)	19,549	(2,4)	48,142	(5,9)
1884*	975,030	681,734	(69,9)	200,498	(20,6)	27,190	(2,8)	65,608	(6,7)
1900	3,744,283	2,888,219	(77,1)	531,240	(14,2)	89,549	(2,4)	23,5275	(6,3)
1905	4,035,575	3,184,437	(78,9)	488,010	(12,1)	99,004	(2,4)	26,4124	(6,6)
1910	4,337,513	3,518,756	(81,1)	465,641	(10,8)	122,296	(2,8)	230,820	(5,3)
1920	4,846,954	4,036,056	(83,1)	520,339	(10,7)	98,451	(2,0)	192,108	(4,0)
1926	5,478,740	4,557,706	(83,2)	577,552	(10,5)	134,844	(2,5)	208,638	(3,8)
1934	6,077,939	5,204,218	(85,6)	591,193	(9,7)	149,385	(2,5)	133,143	(2,2)
1946	7,029,349	5,903,580	(84,0)	675,500	(9,6)	170,011	(2,4)	280,258	(4,0)
1956	7,613,709	6,506,541	(85,5)	656,025	(8,6)	197,865	(2,6)	253,278	(3,3)
1965	8,227,866	7,231,243	(87,9)	780,928	(9,5)	148,874	(1,8)	66,821	(0,8)
1970	8,514,900	7,447,742	(87,5)	848,835	(10,0)	163,386	(1,9)	54,937	(0,6)
1974	8,710,049	7,578,499	(87,0)	885,108	(10,2)	169,105	(1,9)	77,337	(0,9)
1992	8,487,317	7,271,185	(85,7)	800,052	(9,4)	313,396	(3,7)	102,684	(1,2)

**In the territory of Eastern Rumelia.*
Source: Population censuses and current demographic statistics.

Using population census and current demographic statistics, Donkov demonstrates that changes in ethnic composition during the last century were negligible despite the diverse evolution of demographic processes of individual ethnic groups. One explanation he offers is that the basic balancing factors of external migration outweighed the natural increase of minorities.[73] Perhaps what is most significant about these figures is the way

[72] Donkov, *op. cit.* pp. 37-38, Tables 1 and 2.

[73] The phases of Turkish emigration are certainly factors to consider in accounting for the overall decline in the Turkish minority. The largest number of Turkish emigrants left Bulgaria between 1949-1951, where by 1950 it was announced that 250,000 Turks had applied to leave. With restrictions from Turkey, however, who closed their borders in 1950 and again in 1951, the actual number of Turks who left Bulgaria for Turkey was 155,000. In 1968 a

in which they reflect shifts in methodology, in particular, in terms of what definitions were used to categorise ethnic groups and how this impacted on their representation in census reports.

For example, it was not until 1900 that ethnic identity was formally recognised in census data; up until then they had relied exclusively on religion and mother tongue. This may well explain the various shifts in data in terms of the number of those who defined themselves as either Gypsies, Bulgarians, Turks or others. Between 1880 and 1956, for example, we can see an overall increase in the number of those who identify as Gypsies, which at one level may well reflect an increase in the size of their population. At another level, it can be seen as a result of new scopes for identifying with their own ethnic identity. Between 1956 and 1965 this pattern is reversed, which can be seen as a direct result of the removal at this time of the Gypsy category from all official reports, including censuses. The large gap between 1974 and 1992 can also be explained by the fact that the 1975 census minimised minority figures and that the 1985 census did not collect ethnic data at all.[74]

The inter-war period in Bulgaria was a precursor for much of the growth of Gypsy participation in mainstream activity after 1945. It was a time when Gypsies were tending to settle more into factory work thereby increasing their access to organised labour. This period saw the active participation of Gypsies in workers' movements and strikes, together with the development of various Gypsy organisations. Many of those Gypsies

---

further agreement was reached which allowed for the departure of close relatives of those who had left previously. Turkish sources claim that another 130,000 left between 1968-1877. Poulton, *op. cit.* pp. 119-129. A more long term perspective shows that between 1878-1984 a total of 719,836 Turks were reported to have emigrated. Coupled with mass Turkish emigration in 1989, where by late August 300,000 Turks had left for Turkey, it was estimated that by September 1990, only 70 per cent of the original Turkish population in Bulgaria remained. Darina Vasileva, "Bulgarian Turkish Emigration and Return", *International Migration Review*, 26 (2), 1992.

[74] Alexander Kolev "Census Taking in a Bulgarian Gypsy Mahala (Ruse, December 1992)", *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Series 5, 4 (1), 1994.

who decided to settle at this time did so mainly for economic reasons and tended to settle in the existing Gypsy settlements, or *mahalas*. During the second world war however, the situation for Gypsies became more complicated. In line with Nazi-dominated Europe, severe restrictions were imposed on Gypsies, who were treated as an element to be eradicated. They were forcibly settled and their movements were severely restricted. At the same time, many Gypsies served in the army, or worked in labour camps, while many others volunteered to join as partisans.[75]

The ambiguity of the position of Gypsies during the war in Bulgaria culminated in an agreement reached between the Bulgarian Government Commissioner for the Jewish Question, Belev, and a special delegate of Germany, SS Hauptstürmführer Daniker. This prevented the deportation and surrender of the Bulgarian Jewish population, and although no official mention of Gypsies was made, they too were spared.[76] Bulgaria, therefore, was one of the few countries in which most of the Gypsy population survived, without there having been any formal recognition of such. The averted deportation of these two groups, however, did not secure an era of improved majority -minority relations especially where Gypsies were concerned. Instead, the Communist take-over on 9 September 1944 marked the beginning of a renewed campaign aimed at their total absorption.

4.6 Bulgarian Communist policies towards Gypsies.

The problems that Gypsies posed to the process of rapid nation-building in the recently formed Bulgarian lands, did not disappear with the coming to power of the Communists. As with the general pattern across Eastern Europe, Gypsies in Bulgaria had a very specific function within the mode of Communist development. In particular, they were

---

[75] Kenrick, *op. cit.*

[76] Marushiakova and Popov, *Gypsies (Roma), op. cit.* pp. 32-33.

seen by Communist governments as a useful yardstick by which to measure the degree of social transformation that had been achieved at any given time.

With the end of World War II, the Fatherland Front, a coalition of opposition parties including the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP), took power and in 1946 Bulgaria was officially declared a People's Republic, the BCP having assumed total control. Under BCP rule, Bulgaria underwent rapid industrialisation and agriculture was completely collectivised by 1958. The BCP and the Communist controlled Agrarian Union were the only permitted political parties until 1989. As elsewhere in Eastern Europe, elections were based on a single list of candidates. The first few decades for Bulgaria under the cloak of Soviet rule and in the shadow of Yugoslavia, have been described as a period of 'defensive nationalism'.[77] This short period, shaped by the Soviet model, consisted of attempts at establishing Gypsies as an ethnic community within the structure of the Bulgarian nation.

The BCP allowed for the limited development of an active Gypsy intelligentsia, with the flourishing of Gypsy theatres, drama groups, music ensembles and newspapers.[78] According to leading Bulgarian scholars at that time, the coming to power of Communism was the turning point for Gypsies. Marinov and Georgieva, for example, saw the onset of Communism as a force for liberation for Gypsies, who, thanks to the actions of the BCP had now become "cultured, advanced and educated".[79] The assumption was that up until then Gypsies had been 'backward' due to their oppression under the Ottoman empire and their exploitation under capitalism. One of the most noted successes for Gypsies at this time was the establishment of their own magazine. It

[77] M. Pundeff, "Bulgarian Nationalism", *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, Seattle and London, 1969, quoted in Lyudmila Dicheva, "The Ethnic Turks in Bulgaria - Past and Present", in Paul Brett *et al.* (eds.), *Europe: Real and Imagined*, PIC Publishers, Veliko Turnovo, 1998.

[78] Simon Simonov, "The Gypsies: A Re-emerging Minority", *Report on Eastern Europe*, 25 May, 1990. p. 14

[79] Quoted in Marushiakova and Popov, *Gypsies (Roma), op. cit.* p. 52.

continued for over a decade but underwent a series of name changes that reflected changes within it; namely, that of increasing Soviet intervention. Initially it had the Romany name *Romano Esi* meaning *Romany Voice*, but towards the end of its career it had become *Nov put*, the Bulgarian for *New Way*, now a vehicle for Communist propaganda and Gypsy assimilation.[80]

Of all the ex-Communist states, Bulgaria is generally regarded as having displayed the most extreme assimilative policies towards Gypsies. Its attempts at denying the existence of Gypsies was most explicit in the 'Revival Process', the premise of which was the building of an ethnically homogenous nation-state. It contrasts, for example, with the multi-ethnic states of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, which addressed Gypsies in line with other minorities by granting them, if only on paper, 'nationality' status. The particularly harsh treatment of Gypsies in Bulgaria, however, went practically unnoticed by the international community. Simonov notes various possible reasons for this: the tight censorship within Bulgaria, the absence of a strong minority lobby, the media's silence and widespread general discrimination.[81]

Although it was generally believed that Bulgarian political life was not focused intensely on the personality of Zhivkov, his long running and particular leadership style certainly did play a role in Bulgaria's more extreme nationalist agenda.[82] Zhivkov successfully consolidated his power base within the BCP by establishing a strict regime of 'democratic centralism'. This was further strengthened when he later enlisted his family within the party structure, including his daughter, who, in 1980, became chairwoman of

---

[80] Kenrick, *op. cit.*

[81] Simonov, *op. cit.* pp. 12-13.

[82] For example, Zhivkov introduced a series of Criminal Codes in the 1960s which outlawed the propagating of 'anti-democratic and nationalist ideology' such as through 'anti-state agitation and propaganda.' This was specifically aimed at reducing the threat of Macedonian nationalism. Poulton, *op. cit.* p. 108.

the Politburo Commission on Science, Culture and Art.[83] This nepotistic power structure meant that Zhivkov could determine key domestic policies. In terms of the backlash against the 'Revival Process', this meant that it was Zhivkov personally whom many protesters blamed.[84]

The BCP's intent on forging a 'proletarian brotherhood' where both Turks and Gypsies would participate in the 'Peoples Front against Capitalism and Fascism' fuelled their campaign for nurturing a pure Bulgarian consciousness.[85] The BCP promoted a nationalist campaign that required all minorities, including Gypsies to be absorbed into the Bulgarian national ideal. However, according to Silverman Gypsies were still able to maintain a distinctive ethnic identity through their ability to adapt and survive in all other areas of work, culture and lifestyle, that is, "not in combating discrimination but [by] ignoring it."[86]

Thus many Gypsies managed to evade wage-labour structures, instead working informally in the second economy. Their ability to survive as an ethnic group was also reflected in the fact that up until the 1950s there was still a substantial number of Gypsies who were nomadic. This was seen to subvert the Bulgarian world view and culture and Gypsies were seen to be evading many of the avenues through which the Party exerted control. Those Gypsies who continued to rely on travelling for their livelihood however, would be subject to new levels of assimilation policies through the banning of nomadism and previous cultural 'freedoms'. In 1951 the Theatre Roma was closed down and its director Manush Romanov was sent into exile. Music performance, a

---

[83] R. J. Crampton, *A Short History of Modern Bulgaria*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987. pp. 188-89.

[84] Demonstrations against the name-changing campaign which took place in a number of places throughout Bulgaria were often directed against the leader himself, Todor Zhivkov. On December 27 1984, for example, in Momchilgrad a group of Turks attempted to storm the town hall, tearing up pictures of Zhivkov. Poulton, *op. cit.* p. 139.

[85] Neuberger, *op. cit.*

[86] Silverman, *op. cit.* , 1986. p. 61.

vital source of income for many Gypsies, became subject to increasing restriction and certain musical instruments were banned altogether.[87]

Between 1953 and 1960 it was increasingly difficult for Gypsies in Bulgaria to 'ignore' attempts at their assimilation as policies became more aggressive and pervasive. In 1953 the Gypsy Cultural and Educational Society, which had replaced the Egypt Society set up in 1919 and the Gypsy Organisation Badashte established in 1929 was dissolved. The 194 territorial Romany organisations were also disbanded at this time.[88] Gypsy trades were officially banned and an unofficial name changing campaign was waged against Muslim Gypsies, decades before the more well known 'Revival Process' of the late 1980s.[89] The BCP were especially concerned with its Muslim Gypsy population, whom they feared, had the potential for engaging with the Turkish population in a political as well as a religious sense.[90] Indeed, Kubadinski, a BCP official, in his secret memorandum stated that, "a very large percentage of the Gypsies who identify themselves with the ethnic Turks act like fanatical Turks" and that their incorporation into the Bulgarian nation, "should be evaluated as a strategic task."[91]

Muslim Gypsies were forced to replace their Turkic-Arabic names with Bulgarian ones. Gypsy traditional music was banned from public places and even from weddings. These policies of assimilation culminated in the 1958 official banning of all references made to

---

[87] Silverman, *op. cit.* 1986.
[88] Simonov, *op. cit.* p. 14.
[89] Although the current government has recently offered an official apology for the Revival Process of the 1980s, no such apology has been extended towards Gypsies. Reported in Bulgarian press on 29 July 1997.
[90] The concern with separating the Gypsy community from the Turks is evident in a decision (A 101) voted in by the Politburo of the Central Committee of BCP on April 5 1962 which intended "to curb the negative tendencies [...] among Bulgarian Muslims, Gypsies and Tartars to identify with the Turks [...] and to enhance the patriotic education". Quoted in Marushiakova and Popov, *Gypsies (Roma), op. cit.* p. 36. In conjunction with this was the Politburo decision to prohibit the appointment of Turkish clergymen in villages where there lived a high proportion of Gypsies. T. Zang, *Destroying Ethnic Identity - The Gypsies of Bulgaria. A Helsinki Watch Report*, New York, June, 1991. pp. 11-12. Earlier examples of similar policies in the Balkans can be traced back to the 1830-40s, where all Muslim Gypsies in Serbia were forced to accept Christianity. Marushiakova and Popov, *Gypsies (Roma), op. cit.* p. 173.
[91] Quoted in Simonov, *op. cit.* p. 15.

Gypsies as an ethnic group. The 1956 census was the last official document which detailed those results explicitly referring to Gypsies.[92] This led to the peculiar situation whereby, during the peak of its reign, the BCP was able to officially announce that Gypsies did not exist. There was no mention of Gypsies in the media or academic publications, and many Gypsy quarters were surrounded by concrete walls. As part of the official 'Revival Process' in the late 1980s, Gypsies would be subject to even tighter regulations. For example, an official document on 3 August 1984, forbade the wearing of *shalvari* (traditional Turkish trousers) and the speaking of Romani on the street, in public places and institutions. Only Bulgarian was permitted.[93]

During its peak however, assimilation was not always viewed as a negative process, but one that could benefit both parties. This optimism found a popular voice among the Communist intelligentsia who argued that, although forced employment provided for the government a vital pivot on which to rest settlement policies, and that Gypsies tended to fill the low status, unskilled factory jobs or agricultural work on co-operative farms, they were able to benefit from such policies, insofar as gaining access to new arenas of productivity and most importantly benefits, such as pensions, medical benefits, vacations and bonuses. Also, Gypsies were often able to unofficially supplement their welfare benefits and meagre wages with other jobs, such as music performance. Mirga argues that, "productivisation thus was a necessary element of their citizenship rights, and a condition of their integration into the larger society."[94]

---

[92] Marushiakova and Popov, *Gypsies (Roma), op. cit.*

[93] Poulton, *op. cit.*, and Carol Silverman, *op. cit.* 1995. This also affected Pomaks, Albanians and Muslim Tartars. Propagandist articles provide evidence of how all spheres of society were mobilised behind this campaign. What was significant about the world of academia for example was what was not said rather than what was; no mention of ethnic groups could be found anywhere during this time. For example, Ljubomir Ognjanov, "The Socialist Development of Bulgaria 1956-1986", B*ulgarian Historical Review,* 4, 1986.

[94] Andrzej Mirga, "Roma Territorial Behaviour and State Policy: The Case of the Socialist Countries of East Europe", in Michael J. Casimir (ed.), *Mobility and Territoriality*, Aparno Rao, Berg. New York/ Oxford, 1992. p. 262.

Although enforced sedentarisation formed the cornerstone of Bulgarian policy towards Gypsies, it was not as forcible as it had been in countries like Czechoslovakia. Indeed, voluntary sedentarisation of Gypsies in Bulgaria was already underway most notably among the Kalderasha Gypsies well before the issuing of various government decrees. The period leading up to and including the 1950s therefore, saw a second more gradual round of mass sedentarisation. It was not a simple process that just effected Kalderasha Gypsies, it also involved other small groups like Thracian Kalajdzii and Bivolari. Those that had already begun to settle did so voluntarily and had had time to choose a place for settlement. This wave of sedentarisation therefore saw the settlement of Gypsies in small family groups in villages rather than en masse in *mahalas*.

Running parallel with this (between 1958-1980s) however, were policies aimed at forcing Gypsies to set up home in new apartment blocks along side Bulgarians. For example, on October 9 1978 a decision was reached by the secretary of the Central Committee of the BCP entitled "*For a Further Improvement of the Work Among Bulgarian Gypsies, for a More Active Integration into the Building of a Developed Socialist Society*". This decision established certain concrete measures, one of which was "to gradually eliminate segregated sections and neighbourhoods during the next ten to twelve years."[95] Although segregation persisted this policy of integration caused a whole new set of problems fuelling tension between these two groups. Silverman observed in her fieldwork, undertaken during the 1970/80s, that "there amidst concrete terraces, playgrounds and the hostile stares of Bulgarian neighbours, they still celebrate open-air weddings and baptisms [...] Scattered housing has not prevented Gypsies from congregating and celebrating."[96]

---

[95] Quoted in Marushiakova and Popov, *Roma (Gypsies), op. cit.* p. 38.
[96] Silverman, *op. cit.*, 1985. p. 53.

Despite the obvious difficulties that arose out of the contradiction between enforced segregation and continued discrimination, Todorov, then member of the BCP Central Committee and Chairman of the National Assembly, in a speech in March 1985, felt able to state categorically that Bulgaria was a "one-nation state."[97] This declaration of a homogenous nation-state contradicted data gathered at that time, which up until 1990 was kept secret. According to a recently disclosed Communist party memorandum, the number of Gypsies living in Bulgaria had grown from 198,000 in the 1960s to 523,519 in the mid-1980s, so officially accounting for 6 per cent of the population. This growing birth-rate for Gypsies presented the Communists with a host of problems, indeed the memorandum stated that "the Gypsies especially those who are concentrated in compact masses [...] present a difficult problem from the cultural, social and ethnic point of view". As a result their campaign for assimilation was implemented with renewed vigour in the interest of "building a developed socialist society."[98]

The integration of Gypsies into mainstream schooling was one of the key features of the assimilative campaign, and one promoted as, above all, improving the lot of Gypsies. In its objective of promoting Bulgarian values and culture, it gradually eliminated any reference to minority languages or cultures. Alongside Bulgarians, it was compulsory for Gypsies and Turks to attend school until the 8th grade. Schooling was carried out in Bulgarian and there were no opportunities for teaching to be carried out in minority languages or for subjects relevant to these groups to be covered. On the surface, therefore, it seemed that all citizens were integrated into the schooling system. However, within the classroom, segregation was enforced. More explicit was the network of 'special schools' that officially were set up for socially and culturally retarded children.

---

[97] Quoted in Poulton, *op. cit.* p. 121.

[98] *Nova Svetlina,* 5 April 1990, cited by Simonov, *op. cit.* p. 13.

In reality, however, these schools catered mostly for Gypsies.[99] In these 'special schools' the emphasis was, and still is, on vocational rather than academic tuition. This held back many children who were prevented from gaining access to a valid school curriculum hindering their chances for entering into further education.

In attempting to ignore Gypsy culture, Bulgarian official policy had the reverse effect to that which was intended. Ultimately, the campaign to establish a pure and monolithic Bulgarian nation was and never could be realised, for a number of reasons. First, neither foreign observers nor the Bulgarian population were convinced that the Gypsies and their cultures were non-existent. This was tied in with a general uneasiness on the part of the Bulgarian population as a whole regarding the 'revival process'. The 'silent rejection and disagreement' of the majority to the 'absurdity' of the forced assimilation of the Turks gave the clear message that the population did not believe the 'socialist national model' was achievable.[100]

Second, contradictions arose from the sharp contrast between aggressive anti-Gypsy policies and attempts to improve their living conditions, which were tied in with the more general strategy of including Gypsies into the socialist work ethic. Likewise the perceived economic incentives to settle for many Gypsies were rarely met; vital means of income and self-support for Gypsies were severed, but no alternative means of survival were allowed or indeed made available. This, coupled with the more general crackdown on travelling, served to exacerbate rather than to resolve the so-called 'Gypsy problem'.

Third, Gypsies in Bulgaria have been able to survive as an ethnic and cultural group "by fitting into the available social and economic niches in different historical circumstances,

---

[99] As discussed below, these 'special' schools still exist today.

[100] Dicheva, *op. cit.*

[by] leaning on their traditional occupations, [and through] their modified versions or completely different ways of subsistence."[101] For example, by continuing to speak their language at home, and by Turkish Gypsies using their Muslim names among kin.[102]

Finally, rather than guaranteeing their disappearance the enforced aspect of their settlement simply led to the transfer of whole Gypsy communities into segregated areas, *mahalas,* thus making them more visibly distinct.[103] One internal BCP report (published in 1984) estimated that in the early 1950s there were segregated Gypsy areas in 160 of Bulgaria's 237 cities and in 3,000 of its 5,486 villages.[104] In the 1970s, nearly half of all Gypsies living in Bulgaria lived in 'urban ghettos' (547 in total).[105]

This failed campaign of total assimilation has formed the foundation for many of the 'new' problems faced by Gypsies during the transition in Bulgaria. As well as the negative repercussions of many being confined to low-skilled sectors, Gypsies have also been able to carry with them into the transition positive survival skills that they adopted during Communism. Unlike the rest of society, Gypsies have long been practising entrepreneurial skills within the second economy and making use of non-material as well as material resources. Earlier efforts on the part of the BCP to promote a Gypsy intelligentsia has also meant that a strand of educated Gypsies have been able to offer leadership in the process of democratisation.[106] On the whole however, it seems that

---

[101] Marushiakova and Popov, *Gypsies (Roma), op. cit.* p. 165.

[102] Silverman, 1995, *op. cit.*

[103] Paul Hockenos, *Free to Hate: The Rise of the Far Right in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, Routledge, London, 1993.

[104] Luan Troxel "Bulgaria's Gypsies: Numerically Strong, Politically Weak", *RFE/RL Research Report*, 10, 6 March, 1992. p. 59.

[105] According to the former Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, quoted in Alain Reyniers, "Gypsy Populations and their Movements within Central and Eastern Europe and Towards some OECD Countries", *International Migration and Labour Market Policies - Occasional Papers*, No. 1, OECD/GD(95)20, Paris, 1995. p. 17.

[106] For example, according to the 1992 population census, there were 464 Gypsies with BA degrees and 274 with MA degrees. Marushiakova and Popov, however, believe the real figure to be at least twice as high. Marushiakova and Popov, *Gypsies (Roma), op. cit.* p. 40.

Gypsies are suffering more than most, and although we have seen a change in government and in economic relations, the concern with the 'Gypsy problem' has remained.

4.7 Gypsies during the 'transition' in Bulgaria

Whether official policy towards Gypsies rested on banishment, exclusion, inclusion, assimilation or outright genocide, the dominating assumption has always remained the same; national and cultural homogenisation. The transition in Bulgaria has proved to be no exception. Following the collapse of the Communist regime in 1989, Bulgaria embarked on limited market and democratic reform. Due to its geographic location and its relative backwardness we have seen that Bulgaria has been beset with protracted economic crisis. With the collapse of all former guarantees and the onset of economic crisis, we have seen a rise in racial violence, mainly targeted at the Gypsy minority. In the context of an overall decline in fertility rates this has been partly a product of fears over uneven demographic growth. Bulgarian Gypsies are believed to be multiplying at a rate that far exceeds that of Bulgarians, or Turks. Table 4.5, at first sight, appears to support the view that Gypsies are increasing at a higher rate in that they are more inclined towards larger families, whereby 13 per cent of Gypsies interviewed expressed a desire to have 4 children as opposed to 5 per cent for Bulgarians and 4,3 per cent for Turks. However, these differences become evened out when the average number of desired children is calculated for each of the ethnic groups.[107]

[107] Todor Kaloyanov, "Zhelan broi detsa spored etnicheskata prinadlezhnost na naselenieto" (Desired number of children according to ethnic groups), *Statistika*, 1, 1995. Table 2, p. 20.

Table 4.5 Desired number of children according to ethnic group, % 1992

Desired number of children	Bulgarians	Turks	Gypsies
1	11,8	11,8	9,4
2	62,3	58,2	38,2
3	18,4	23,6	30,7
4	5,0	4,3	13,1
5	1,6	0,9	5,1
6+	0,9	1,2	3,5
Average number	**2, 25**	**2, 28**	**2, 77**

Source: Data from a representative national survey conducted in 1992.

The task of measuring the ethnic composition of Bulgaria dominated official policy especially during the Communist period and has also proved problematic during transition. The major problem in measuring Gypsy numbers is their ethnic, religious and language heterogeneity. Most of the Gypsies in Bulgaria are Muslims, a substantial minority are Orthodox Christians and a small minority are Catholics or Protestants. Further distinctions exist within these categories, for example, between Turkish Gypsies, which refer to those Muslim Gypsies who speak Turkish as their mother tongue and identify themselves as Turks, and Muslim Romani-speaking Gypsies who identify themselves as Gypsies. Among the Turkish Gypsies there are both Sunnites and Shiites, as well as those who are Christian Orthodox, Catholic or Evangelical.[108]

The high Muslim component within Gypsy communities and their tendency to identify themselves primarily with Turks has continued to have a number of repercussions. It has aroused fears among nationalistic parties over the growing power of Turks within Bulgaria, which they see in the high number of 'false' Turks, whether they be in the form of Gypsies or Pomaks. As a result, a political distinction between the equating of self-identification with ethnic membership on the one hand and the demand for some objective criteria on the other has emerged, fuelled by demands on the part of the Turkish

[108] Elena Marushiakova, "Ethnic Identity Among Gypsy Groups in Bulgaria", *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 2 (2), 1992. p. 97

based Movement for Rights and Freedoms to allow all those who declare themselves as Turks to be recognised as such.[109]

In 1989 before the end of Communist rule a secret, or non-announced census was carried out by the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior. The results of this census revealed some of the difficulties inherent in the process of counting minority numbers.[110] It showed that there were 576,927 Gypsies in Bulgaria (6,45 per cent of the total population), which was considerably higher than the figure of 313,396 (3,7 per cent) later reached in the 1992 census. One explanation for such inconsistencies as addressed earlier is the question of methodology. The Ministry of Interior in the 1989 census had depended upon 'external' information, in that the census showed "who is considered a Gypsy by the surrounding population". This contrasted with the principle of self determination that was used in official population censuses.

In 1992, for the first time since 1975, questions were included in the census questionnaires that dealt explicitly with ethnicity, language and religion, which had among others, options of Gypsy ethnicity and Romani language. According to the 1992 census, 822,000 of the country's 8.5 million population had identified themselves as Turks, and 288,000 as Gypsies (elsewhere the official figure for Gypsies is reported 313,396 - 3.7 per cent).[111] 829,000 spoke Turkish as their mother tongue and 257,000 gave Romani as their mother tongue. The Muslim population was 1,078,000 and the Christian population 7,373,000.[112] The results of a 2 per cent sample survey carried out by the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute in 1993, put the overall percentage of

---

[109] Kolev, *op. cit.* pp. 34-45.

[110] Komitetat sa UNICEF, *Natsionalen analis na problemite na Bulgarskoto dete i Bulgarskoto semejstvoto*, Sofia, 1991.

[111] The percentage is based on the figure of 313,386 calculated using the 1992 census total of 8,487,317 Bulgarian citizens.

[112] Kolev, *op. cit.* p. 33.

Gypsies throughout Bulgaria even lower, estimated at 3.4 per cent.[113] However, as already discussed in section 5 of Chapter 1, 500,000 (5.9 per cent) is generally taken as the most realistic figure.

Kolev in his analysis of census taking in 1992 in a Bulgarian Gypsy *mahala,* draws attention to some of the complexities inherent to the process of ethnic identification at a local level. Gypsies in Bulgaria tend to live in close-knit communities in their own neighbourhood, known as *mahalas,* but are sometimes also referred to as 'ghettos', most of which, as discussed above, stem back to the Ottoman empire. These *mahalas* found on the edge of towns or cities, are often poorly resourced with weak infrastructural development and low levels of sanitation. According to Kolev's study of one such *mahala,* there were a variety of ethnic groups living there. Out of the 1,000 inhabitants most were considered Turkish Gypsies and the rest included Bulgarians (c25), Turks (c15) and Christian Gypsies (c30). Although the general consensus among the inhabitants was that most of those who lived there were Gypsies, in the census questionnaire most Turkish Gypsies declared themselves as Turks, all of whom spoke as their mother tongue Turkish. Only 9 out of the 151 Turkish Gypsies in Kolev's designated area identified themselves as Gypsies, some of which Kolev described as still undergoing the process of 'Turkification'.[114]

Table 4.6 shows how in the 1990s the Turkish identity is just one of many for Gypsies living in Bulgaria and that they form a complex and diverse set of communities. Gypsies inhabit most parts of the country mostly living in *mahalas.* Gypsies also form large communities in rural areas. Although sparse in some areas, such as the mountainous

---

[113] These results were part of a survey carried out by the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute entitled *Demographic Features of Bulgaria 1993.* Cited in Garabed Minassian and Stoyan Totev, "The Bulgarian Economy in Transition - Regional Aftereffects", *Eastern European Economics,* 34 (3), May/June, 1996. p. 57, Table 5.

[114] Kolev, *op. cit.*

regions of the Rhodepes in the south-west, there are a number of villages in Bulgaria, particularly towards the north-east where the entire population consists of Gypsies. Official data reflects this uneven distribution of Gypsies across Bulgaria, although different sources tend to disagree about the exact dimensions this may take.[115]

Table 4.7 shows that in the early years of reform, Gypsies were a convenient scapegoat for Bulgaria's social problems. According to opinion polls carried out in 1994 and in 1997 by the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, Gypsy prejudice may have diffused in some areas but certainly not in others. Out of 1,000 ethnic Bulgarians, 84 per cent of the respondents in 1994 and 84 per cent in 1997 believed that Gypsies were 'lazy and irresponsible'. 85 per cent and 80 per cent respectively believed that Gypsies could not be 'trusted or relied upon'. Finally 59 per cent in 1994 and 68 per cent in 1997 said that they would not live in the same neighbourhood as Gypsies.[116]

The extent to which such surveys accurately reflect the attitudes of all Bulgarians is, of course, debatable and they may even underestimate them. However, what these figures serve to demonstrate is that far from Communism solving the 'Gypsy problem' they served only to exacerbate it, and even well into transition it has yet to be resolved.

---

[115] The 1992 census suggested that in the Montana region, 9.1 per cent of the population were Gypsies as opposed to 0.3 per cent in the city of Sofia, however, according to the 1993 survey Gypsies amounted to no more than 5.5 per cent in Montana and 0.9 per cent in Sofia.

[116] Krassimir Kanev, "Dynamics of Inter-Ethnic Tensions in Bulgaria and the Balkans", *Balkan Forum*, 4 (2), June 1996. pp. 213-252.

Table 4.6 Examples of Gypsy communities in Bulgaria according to self-identification.

Group names	**Meaning and characteristics**
Lifestyle	
Jerlii	from Turkish - local, living in one and the same place, sedentary
Kaldarasi/Kardarasi	from Romanian - cauldron, nomadic
Laesi/Laesri/Lajnest/Lajines	from Romanian - wanderers, nomadic
Katunari	from Bulgarian - wanderers and tent-dwellers, nomadic
Religion	
Dassikane Roma	Bulgarian Gypsies, Christian
Xoraxane/Xoroxane	Turkish Gypsies. Three types: Muslim who speak Romanes; Muslim who speak Turkish; Christians who speak Romanes (in the latter case Turkish implies the historical practice of Islam)
Common Group Origin	
Agupti/Gjupti	From Egypt
Wallachian	From what was Wallachia
Serbian	From Serbia
Hungarian	From Hungary
Based on localities, regions	
Kotlenski Tsigani	Gypsies from Kotel
Gradeski Tsigani	Gypsies from Gradets
Occupation	
Kalajdzii	Tinsmiths. At least four different groups are identified as tinsmiths so this category needs to be used in conjunction with other more general names.
Grebeneri	Comb-makers. As with the tinsmiths this is used in some cases even when the group no longer practices this profession.
Property status/particularities	
Zlatari	Gold (in Bulgarian)
Lovari	Affluence/money (deriving from *love* in Romanes)
Drandari	Based on the sound produced during the spinning of wool
Pejorative labelling	
Dzorevci	Mules
Tzutzumani/Kuckari	Dog-eaters
Bajcari	Pork-eaters
Patronymic/matronymic	
Varbanesti	Varban's children
Unknown origin	
Ficiri	Self-appellation of settled Roma in the Loznitsa *mahala* in Stara Zagora

Source: Marushiakova (1992), Marushiakova and Popov (1997)

Table 4.7 Attitudes of Bulgarian population towards Gypsies, % 1991.

Gypsies regarded as:	%
thieves	89
bullies	76
black marketers	75
liars	70
drifters	67

Source: National Institute of Youth Studies, May 1991.

Perhaps more revealing (although less explicitly so) are those reports that describe Gypsies as forming a new kind of underclass. One Bulgarian report on the situation of Gypsies since 1989 argued that, "the Roma are becoming increasingly isolated and are gradually dropping out of 'our world'. As a result, they are in practice being left behind in all social areas, education, culture, socio-economic and political life."[117] Although conditions for Gypsies have seriously deteriorated, this type of analysis serves to equivocate the issue and opens the way for discussions on Gypsies that feed on traditional stereotypes.

For example, in a discussion of Gypsy 'trader tourism' in Bulgaria, Konstantinov uses language such as 'abnormal practices' and 'deviancy' to describe their economic survival strategies. He implies that Gypsies are inherently prone to marginalisation and argues that they naturally inhabit this marginal condition, "the desire to get out of their living situation is not evident" and that furthermore the reasons why Gypsies carry out such practices are above all for 'egotistical' ends of "material gain, gratification and excitement and not having to share a global sense of responsibility."[118] Marushiakova and Popov are extremely wary of such approaches that portray all Gypsies as a

[117] Ilona Tomova, *The Gypsies in the Transition Period*, International Centre for Minority Studies and Inter Cultural Relations, Sofia, 1995. p. 19.

[118] Yulian Konstantinov, "Hunting for Gaps Through Boundaries: Gypsy Tactics for Economic Survival in the Context of the Second Phase of Post-Totalitarian Changes in Bulgaria (1994-)", *Innovation*, 7 (3), 1994. pp. 234-244.

'destructuralised', 'marginalised' or 'abnormal' community, who have no ethno-cultural traditions. Such an approach, they argue, reinforces the idea that there is a 'Gypsy problem' of their own making to be solved.[119]

In Bulgaria, we have witnessed, since 1989, the development of a new model of inter-ethnic relations which are still, to a large extent, based on existing assumptions of Bulgarian supremacy and the perceived need for self-protection against the external threat of Turkey or the internal threat of minorities. The so-called process of democratisation is the new medium through which policy agendas are being formulated. The extent to which minorities have direct access to this process of decision making however, remains debatable. For Gypsy NGO leaders and advocates in the field, the transition, therefore, represents mixed blessings. Some have expressed a bitterness towards the new levels of poverty and high unemployment, which they associate entirely with the transition. There was a strong sense of nostalgia for many of them, who harked back to Communist days and the basic rights, they believed, it had guaranteed. On the other hand, many were keen to emphasise the positive repercussions of the transition, especially the new political and cultural freedoms, which for Gypsies represented a significant break from previous aggressive assimilation policies.

The consequences of years of assimilation have not only been detrimental to the well-being and cultural validity of Gypsies, but also to the Gadjo's understanding of them. It is often the case that the non-Gypsy population have little understanding of Gypsies and have no inclination to rectify this.[120] Schooling is an area in which this has been most

---

[119] Marushiakova and Popov, *op. cit.* 1997.

[120] An interview with a worker at the Social Services revealed an ignorance concerning the Gypsies she dealt with. Her official language of facts and figures often gave way to a simmering frustration. Her sense of irritation and animosity towards Gypsies was littered throughout the course of the interview but was expressed most vividly after it had drawn to a close. She explained how the conflicts that arose at the workplace were caused by Gypsy clients, who on their part, she argued, expected to be given social assistance without showing any motivation to work. Although she spoke of various initiatives that encouraged Gypsies to learn to read and write, her assumption remained that

apparent. Schooling is still seen as an important site of integration during the transition, whereby in 1990 the literacy rate for Gypsies was still only 13 per cent.[121] The issue of schooling reveals one of the most basic contradictions in strategies of inclusion and integration. On the one hand, reformers and proponents of integration encourage the participation of Gypsies into formal schooling, expressing concerns over high drop-out rates. Their argument rests on the assumption that all it takes for Gypsies to be included is to ensure that the school system is more open to them. On the other hand, Gypsies are still implicitly regarded as ultimately inferior and as not capable of reaching the same academic potential as the rest of the population. Tomova's report embodies this paradox, in which she argues, "mechanisms to make schools more attractive to [Gypsy] children should include additional lessons in music, dance and the visual arts [...] driving, motor mechanics, cosmetics, sewing and pattern making."[122] This tendency towards promoting only vocational skills for Gypsies is especially prominent in the high number of 'special schools' that still exist throughout Bulgaria. These 'special schools' remain separate from mainstream schools and not only reinforce artificial divisions between the majority population and Gypsies, but also the stereotype that Gypsies are 'backward'.

The first 'Special School' in Bulgaria was set up in Plovdiv in 1969. It aimed at offering professional training and a reduced general curriculum for pupils who were 'retarded' in one way or another. There are now over 30 special schools in Bulgaria with about 18,000 pupils in all. About 90 per cent of them are Gypsies. According to Stefan Chernev, the

---

ultimately it was Gypsies themselves who were to blame. Interview 24.10.97. However, some individuals working behind the scenes in the world of social policy, often discredited and stereotyped as anti-Gypsy, were surprisingly well informed and aware of issues normally ignored by the general population. For example, an interview I carried out with the Head Prison Warder of the only woman's prison in Bulgaria, revealed a character who expressed a deep concern with learning about the culture of his inmates, the majority of whom were Gypsies. However, while keen to discuss the complex ethnic groups that make up Gypsies in Bulgaria, he still believed that 'they' were a peculiar people who were instinctively separate from 'us' and that crime committed by a Gypsy was a 'Gypsy crime'. Interview 21.10.97

[121] Bulgarian Telegraph Association and BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 1990.

[122] Tomova, *op. cit.* p. 86.

Bulgarian Deputy Minister for Lower Education, before 1979 only 10-15 per cent of Gypsies who completed the 8th grade went onto secondary schools. Since 1979 (and the implementation of special schools) he claims this figure has risen to 25-30 per cent. Now, he argues, it is the case that 70-80 per cent of the Gypsy students who attend 'special schools' graduate, all of whom receive a certificate saying they have technical skills.[123]

However, an interview with the director of such a school revealed that pupils on graduating have little chance of getting a job or continuing in education.[124] This school also offered insights into other types of problems implicit to this policy of segregation. Situated in one of the Gypsy *mahalas* on the outskirts of a large town, this 'special school' was inhabiting a disused building that had recently been evacuated by the previous occupiers due to sinking foundations. The semi-derelict appearance on the outside was not extended to its interior. Although there were broken windows and no heating, there were pictures on the wall and an abundance of plants. During the course of the interview I was able to extract details about the nature of the school and its day to day running. At the same time I was able to catch glimpses of some of the undercurrents that fed into the more general treatment of Gypsies in these schools.

The school catered for pupils aged from 6 to 16 years with a total number of 197 and on average 10 pupils per class. The school curriculum, in line with state policy, displayed a distinct lack of general curriculum subjects. The stipulation is that there must be nine hours of Bulgarian language, two lessons of craft work, and three lessons of physical

---

[123] Cited in Zang, *op. cit.* pp. 32-34.

[124] Interview: 10.3.97. The interview was arranged for me by a friend, whose husband was a teacher there. It was part of a more general visit and took place in her office before classes began. This visit was worthwhile insofar as it enabled me to get a sense of the atmosphere and general attitudes within the school, together with obtaining specific information on pupil composition and selection criteria. However, given that I was welcomed as a special guest and that my visit was pre-planned, coupled with the fact that this was the only special school I was able to visit, meant that any observations I made could only be tentative.

education per week. Eleven year old pupils are taught at the kindergarten level for two years and language learning is fairly basic, involving the alphabet and reading short texts. Pupils are tested termly, using criteria set by state inspectors. The level of intervention from external inspectors, invests this type of schooling with a formal legitimacy. However, it does not distract from the obvious discrimination that these schools reinforce: the segregation of Gypsy pupils from mainstream schooling.

Over three-quarters (150) of the pupils were Turkish Gypsies and nearly a fifth (36) were Bulgarian Gypsies, the remaining 5 per cent (11) being 'ethnic Bulgarians'. Despite the over representation of Gypsy pupils this was not reflected in the composition of the staff, all of whom were non-Gypsies.[125] The director explained that this was not a Gypsy school by definition, but a school for children who were either 'socially or mentally' retarded. Her interchangeable use of these terms suggested that her distinction between these very different labels was blurred. While implying a lack of proper medical definition, this did not prevent her from confidently claiming that according to their school's criteria only about 20 per cent of her pupils were socially retarded the rest were diagnosed as mentally retarded.

The director spoke of problems of high absenteeism, laying the blame on traditional stereotypes, such as early marriages or family commitments outside of school. Beyond this, however, she also located the source of obstacles to them finding work afterwards with their 'disabilities'. The child is assessed according to his/her IQ, which is backed up by an examination carried out by a team of specialists, psychologists and teachers, organised bi-annually by the regional education office. The assessment involves looking at family history, general condition, language ability, any hearing difficulties, and

[125] When I asked why there were no Gypsy members of staff, she answered that the majority of Gypsies do not have sufficient training or education.

'psychiatric' state. Pupils who are seen as needing this assessment are identified by either teachers or parents. One of the most common factors taken as a suitable indication is repeated failure at school. Having been shown a recent example of an assessment form for such a case, it was possible to observe that there were many ambiguities surrounding such diagnosis. In this case, the diagnosis was borderline, but the final recommendation was that the child in question should attend this school. The justification for this were signs that the child displayed 'an inability to think logically', in spite of having 'a sense of time, space and orientation'.

The director admitted that most of the pupils there were borderline cases and that "ironically, it was the eleven ethnic Bulgarians who were most 'severely handicapped". The general nature of this assessment whereby assumptions are made about the 'psychic state' of a child seemed to point towards a hidden racist agenda. The implicit use of pseudo-science within this realm of 'special' schools to make judgements about racial groups is an attempt to justify or at best to deflect from the racist essence inherent to processes of selection. This is some indication of the extent to which assumptions that underpinned the Revival Period are still evident in today's new democratic Bulgaria.[126]

In contrast to this overt regressive treatment of Gypsies, the Bulgarian state has attempted to embark on other more 'progressive' programmes aimed at improving the lot of Gypsies. However, these programmes often remain ill-informed, unprepared, sporadic and demonstrate little evidence of thorough preparation or follow-up projects. As a result they often fail to be implemented in the first place, or if they do get implemented, fail to

[126] The world of (pseudo-) science offered a strong ally to Communist policy during the height of ethnic assimilation in its objective of denying the existence of all ethnic groups. A study of Bulgarian skulls undertaken during its peak concluded that "It should be pointed out that craniometric characteristics of the country's population do not manifest essential differences in the different regions, which demonstrates the ethnic homogeneity of the Bulgarian people." D. Kadanov, S. Mutafov, *The Human Skull in a Medico-Anthropological Aspect*, Bulgarian Academy of Science, Sofia, 1984, quoted in M. Kohn, *op. cit.* p. 190.

fulfil original objectives thus remaining just 'one-offs'. For example, in 1993-4 the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs embarked on a pilot programme in Stolipinovo, a Gypsy neighbourhood in Plovdiv, for the development of literacy, professional qualifications and employment among the Gypsy population. Unofficially it was admitted that it had failed to reach most of its targets. Only a few dozen people gained employment which was not even permanent, and participation in training courses had deprived Gypsies of unemployment benefits leaving many participants in fact worse off. Despite its obvious ineffectiveness, plans were still made to carry out similar projects in other cities throughout Bulgaria.[127]

Given that special schools are still very much in existence, the function of state-led initiatives in other areas remains superficial; simply to give the impression that the Bulgarian government are abiding by human rights guidelines. Therefore, little is achieved in terms of tackling the big ongoing problems that remain entrenched in the very operation of its political economy. The desire to keep minority groups in their place continues to form the back bone of much policy design. Ultimately, the 'Gypsy problem' has threaded its way through the different phases of Bulgarian social policy despite shifts in rhetoric.

4.8 Gypsies and the new framework of minority rights

In the post-1989 situation, Bulgaria, alongside the rest of Eastern Europe, has found itself thrust onto the Western dominated international scene. In this new context, previous assimilative programmes aimed at minorities have been frowned upon, and replaced by approaches that emphasise the link between rights of ethnic minorities (civil, political, social) and their access to livelihood and markets. The framework of

[127] Marushiakova and Popov, *Gypsies (Roma), op. cit.* p. 4.

international human rights has been seen as pivotal for achieving "stability, democratic security and peace" in Europe.[128]

Against the backdrop of mounting ethnic tension and rising fear over minority nationalism in Eastern Europe since 1989, there has been a revival of the minority question.[129] The Balkans peninsular is especially seen as a trouble spot, where, in the words of Roudometof, "the close geographic proximity of ethnic minorities with their external homelands and (in some cases) their high birth rates" have intensified the 'structural strain' on this region.[130] Policies of anti-immigration in the West however, dramatically undercut the West's apparent selfless concern with such problems. "The aim, in short," as worded in the Report of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, "should be to improve the 'quality of life' in migration-producing countries [...] for the sake of such improvements, but also for the reduction in pressures on international migration."[131] Tightening migration laws have had particularly damaging ramifications for the status of Gypsies, who, more than most, are perceived as a key potential threat.[132] Yaron Matras directly attacks the implicit agenda of West European policies towards Gypsies, which he argues "are still about keeping Gypsies out" and that

---

[128] *Preamble*, of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, infra n.2., Council of Europe, *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1995. p. 5.

[129] See Martyn Rady, "Minority Rights and Self-determination in Contemporary Eastern Europe", *Slavonic and East European Review*, 71 (4), October 1993. Nationalism in the 'East' is seen by commentators in the West as one dictated by emotional and unpredictable ties of kinship. This sentiment was expressed at a conference held in the presence of the Commissioner of National Minorities during which anxious concerns over nationalism in Eastern Europe were being voiced by a number of scholars and practitioners. *Minority Rights in the 'New' Europe*, International conference organised by the Department of Legal Studies, University of Central Lancashire, The Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, London, 29 November 1996.

[130] Victor Roudometof, "The Consolidation of National Minorities in South Eastern Europe", *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 24, Winter 1996. p. 190.

[131] The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe - Roma (Gypsies) in the CSCE Region, *Report of the High Commissioner on National Minorities*, Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials, 1993. p. 11

[132] Charlemagne notes targetting by the French media of East European Gypsy immigants with examples from *Le Monde* which described them as 'beggers' (23.3.1991) and *L'Express* which described them as 'reproducing like rabbits' (22.10.1992). Jacqueline Charlemagne, *Migrations Est-Ouest: Le Cas Des Tsiganes*, Laboratoire de Sociologie Juridque Paris II - CNRS, Convention FAS, No. 75 1084 91, December 1992. p. 58

"securing human rights in the East simply happens to figure in this very short-term and narrow minded selfish calculation."[133]

The number of those Gypsies who do migrate, or seek asylum in Western Europe are considered numerically far more significant than they actually are.[134] *The New York Times*, for example, reported that in 1992 alone some 130,000 Romanian and Bulgarian citizens sought asylum in Germany, most of whom were Gypsies.[135] The media's ability to hype up the issue of Gypsy migration into an 'invasion' has helped to encourage this misleading image of Gypsies and has fuelled irrational concerns over migration control.[136] Leading West European countries, faced with an apparent 'influx' of immigrants from Eastern Europe, are keen to distinguish between 'genuine' political refugees and 'bogus' economic migrants. This allows them legitimately to impose stiffer regulations for the majority of incomers, yet still stick to the claim that they are upholding human rights.

The Copenhagen Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (1990) devoted considerable attention to minority issues and in 1992 the Council of Europe opened for signature the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. This Charter seemed promising in that it promoted the use of regional or minority language in private

---

[133] Yaron Matras, "Book Review of PER 'The Roma in the 21st Century: A Policy Paper." In Jetske Mijs (ed.) *O Drom International*, pilot edition, 1998.

[134] Reynier argues that the westward movements of Gypsies have coincided with a much larger general exodus of nationals in Central and Eastern Europe and that if movements attributable to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia are not considered then the general index of Gypsy emigration from Central and Eastern Europe lies between 2.5-4.6 per 1,000 inhabitants (this figure is the ratio of the total number involved in the 1960-1992 flows to the estimated total Gypsy population). When compared with the emigration index for the rest of the population of Central and Eastern Europe which has been estimated to be 8.4 per 1,000 (for the period 1946-1982), it seems, therefore, that contrary to popular belief Gypsies have a lesser tendency than most to migrate westwards. Reyniers, *op. cit.* p. 15.

[135] *The New York Times*, 7 February 1993.

[136] The response of the British government officials and the media to the arrival of a few hundred Gypsies from the Czech Republic in October 1997 is just one example of how heightened concerns quickly escalated into hysteria over westbound migration. Tabloids, as well as more 'liberal' newspapers, such as *The Guardian* and the *The Independent* fed irrational concerns over a 'tidal wave' of Gypsies flooding into Britain from Eastern Europe. Immigration officials imprisoned many of the newly arrived refugees, which was deemed legitimate by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, who claimed that he did not see them as anything other than just 'economic refugees'

and public life as an inalienable right. However, it failed to deal explicitly with non-territorial languages such as Romani. Rather than explicitly addressing the issue of Gypsies head-on, governmental agencies have subsumed them into a wider discussion on minority rights. Part II ("Objectives and Principles"), for example, only implicitly deals with issues relevant to Gypsies, with its vague reference to "languages deprived of territory" (Article 7.5).[137]

The emphasis on language is also a tactic used in the Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.[138] The Convention is the first ever legally binding multilateral instrument devoted to the protection of national minorities. It stresses the use of language, equal access to education and the full participation of minorities in every sphere of life but, again fails to offer specifics. Wheatly is disappointed by the limited provisions offered to Eastern Europe by the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities,

> *It is unlikely that such a minimalist approach to the granting of national minority rights and exhortation of the inclusion of the national minority rights into the public sphere of the State will provide a basis for the solution of long standing ethnic disputes.*[139]

Until minorities can take part in the very process of dialogue, Wheatly argues that any achievement of a genuine, pluralist, multi-ethnic state remains illusory.

Moves towards incorporating the rights of Gypsies have been held back over disputes about definition, and subsequently have been implemented, if at all, in a haphazard fashion. It seems that in winning certain rights, Gypsies are forced to concede others.

---

[137] J. P. Liégeois, *Roma, Gypsies, Travellers*, Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1994. p. 281.

[138] Opened for signature on 1 February 1995. Council of Europe, *Human Rights, A Continuing Challenge for the Council of Europe*, Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1995. pp. 46-47.

[139] Stephen Wheatly, "National Minorities and the Emerging Human Right to Political Inclusion and Dialogue", *East European Human Rights Review*, 2 (2), 1997. p. 151.

Both Gheorghe and Acton address the contradictions that emerge when trying to implement legal protection for Gypsies at the local, national and international levels. In particular they stress the importance of acknowledging that rights for Gypsies can be formulated in a number of ways such as: 'indigenous peoples'; 'ethnic minorities'; 'national minorities'; 'international minority'; or 'transnational minority'.[140]

In addition, Gypsy rights have been incorporated into existing legal frameworks often in a subsidiary fashion reinforced by a passive rather than active approach. Positive measures on the part of governments promoting Gypsy identity, culture, and equality, beyond the passive prevention of discrimination are rarely encouraged. The incorporation of Gypsies into the human rights framework has therefore been a controlled and limited process, and has served to shield the breaching of fundamental rights elsewhere. In the light of this, the acquisition of certain rights at the formal level, although important symbolically, does not necessarily translate into political and social change at the ground level.

Problems soon emerge, for example, with the very process of defining national minorities, especially for the Gypsy populations of Eastern Europe. In the context of post-1989 Bulgaria we have seen that it has become increasingly apparent that Gypsies do not constitute a uniform and homogenous community, and do not organise under one banner.[141] Calls on behalf of Gypsies to unite and form a cohesive political force are often futile. According to Mirga the divisions between Gypsies go deep, and individual

---

[140] Nicolae Gheorghe, "The Social Construction of Romani Identity." In T. Acton (ed.) *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity*, University of Hertfordshire Press, Hatfield, 1997; Acton, 1998, *op. cit.*; and N. Gheorghe and T. Acton "Dealing with Multiculturality: Minority, Ethnic, National and Human Rights." In Council of Europe (ed.), *Gypsies in the Locality*, Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1994.

[141] Marushiakova and Popov, "Gypsy Minority", *op. cit.* In an interview with Toni Shishmanova C (2) 18.3.1997 director, *Partners for Democratic Change*, Sofia, she explained that in her work, which involves a broad cross section of minorities, it is always Gypsies who display the most internal tensions, usually triggered by religious or political allegiances.

Gypsy groups, in the interest of self-preservation, are concerned with maintaining some kind of 'purity'. Joining together with other Gypsy groups is seen by some as potentially diluting, demeaning and non-productive. Mirga, in his analysis of territorial behaviour among peripatetic groups, argues that the socio-economic unit tends to be the main source of conflict among Gypsy groups. Although Gypsies have devised various patterns for avoiding conflict, such as one group leaving the area, or some groups developing new skills to access new niches, problems of decreasing demand, a growing Gypsy population, and the overall stigmatisation of Gypsies under a single stereotype have led to heightened tensions among certain groups of Gypsies within Bulgaria.[142] The representation of Gypsies and other minorities within the framework of human rights is therefore vital in terms of laying important groundwork for Gypsy political organisation and for gaining international recognition.

4.9 International frameworks and policy making in Bulgaria

The promotion of international policy agendas, frameworks and conventions have influenced the Bulgarian national policy agenda especially in terms of their approach towards Gypsies.[143] Since 1989 the Bulgarian government has taken the official line that minority groups now have the scope for developing and articulating some degree of ethnic autonomy. The new Constitution composed in 1991 stipulated in Article 6 paragraph 2 that there is to be no "limitations of the rights or privileges based on ethnic belonging." The passive nature of this recommendation was later updated in November 1992 when it allowed for "certain socially justified privileges for 'groups of citizens'

---

[142] Mirga in Casimir, *op. cit.* pp. 65-67

[143] This has even penetrated university teaching. A new MA course on intercultural dialogue was introduced at Sofia University in 1998, which includes subjects on Gypsies in order to promote awareness among new academics about relations between ethnic and cultural minorities in Bulgaria. A media and minority course has already been taught in the faculty of journalism for some years. This slight shift within university education towards minority issues, however, is just a small step, in that explicit anti-Gypsy prejudice remains the norm. Milica Pesic, "Sofia Study Addresses Racial Splits", *Times Higher*, 16 November 1998.

who are in 'an unfavourable social situation'."[144] There have been some advances made in the field of education for Turks and also in some cases for the Gypsy population. Optional classes of 'mother-tongue' education have been introduced, aimed mostly at Turks, including a programme allowing 400 Turkish students to train as teachers.[145] In specific reference to Gypsies, the Decree 232 of 10 December 1991 outlines that the teaching of the Romani language (Romanes) be allowed for 4 hours per week as an optional subject.[146]

As a result, according to Demitri Iliev, a phonologist who specialises in Romany linguistics and who works for an NGO in Sofia, some 3,000 Gypsy classes in *Romanes* have become available, supplemented by Romany textbooks published by the Ministry of Education, such as "Romani Alfabeta" (The Romani Alphabet) and "Az ucha Bulgarski Ezik" (I Learn the Bulgarian Language).[147] Allowances have also been made in the realm of media production where newspapers and radio programmes in minority languages representing minority voices are more freely broadcast and distributed.[148] This, together with new legal freedoms for minorities, such as the passing of a law in 1990 which gave Muslims and other religious minorities the right to paid leave during their religious holidays seemed to paint a promising picture.

---

[144] Marushiakova and Popov, "Gypsy Minority", *op. cit.* pp. 2-3.

[145] Kanev, *op. cit.* p. 2.

[146] Marushiakova, *op. cit,* 1994. p. 112.

[147] Interview with Demitri Iliev (17.3.1997), the co-author (with Khristo Kyuchukov) of these textbooks. Kenrick, a proficient linguist in Romanes, however, stresses the difficulty of standardising this language which, he estimates consists of at least 50 dialects in Bulgaria alone. Donald Kenrick, "The Gypsies of Bulgaria Before and After the 10th of November", paper presented to *The Gypsy Lore Society Conference*, July, 1991. p. 4

[148] Interview with Savolina Danova B (1) 17.3.97 *Human Rights Project(HRP),* Sofia. As well as monitoring human rights abuses and offering legal assistance to Gypsies, the HRP have contributed to setting up training programmes to help Gypsies set themselves up with radio broadcasts. The Baptist Church has also played an important role in helping Gypsies to set up their own radio programmes. For example, "Words of Hope" is a radio programme set up by two Gypsy brothers in October 1996, the main content of which is the preaching of John's Gospel. T. Thomas, "Bulgaria Trip Report", February 22-26 1997, unpublished. p. 1.

The potential far reaching implications of these changes, however, are not so clear cut. The 1991 Constitution was preceded by two new laws which were implemented in the aftermath of Communist collapse. From March 1990 the right to choose freely one's own name was restored and amnesty was ensured for those imprisoned during the 'Revival Process' and from November 1990 freedom of assembly and association was allowed.[149] However, the Law on Political Parties, adopted by Parliament in April 1990, formed a counter current to these changes. Its main thrust prohibits the registration of political parties along ethnic or religious lines. Article 3. paragraph 2 reads "No Political party can be constituted [...] on a religious or ethnic basis [...]", which has strong assimilative overtones.[150] Nevertheless, Gueorgiev a prominent Gypsy leader and one time BSP MP, is keen to support this law for he sees it as important that Gypsies join with existing party politics rather than set themselves in opposition to them.[151] The counter argument expressed by other Gypsy leaders is that it allows for Gypsies to be manipulated by the political parties, which are not concerned with supporting Gypsy interests.[152]

With Bulgaria finding itself on a new and a seemingly more accessible European playing field, the BSP government was keen to reduce any potential threats to future membership of the European Union. November 1991 saw Bulgaria's ratification of the first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by the BSP, which granted citizens the right to individual petitions. In May 1992 the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms was also ratified. By September 1992 this was put into force and was immediately used by members of the Gypsy community to file a complaint about human rights abuses in Bulgaria.[153] A

---

[149] Kanev, *op. cit.*

[150] Angela Kocze, *The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe: Legal Remedies or Invisibility?*, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights - Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI), Warsaw, March-May, 1996. p. 18

[151] He is leader of the Confederation of Roma in Bulgaria, Sofia set up in 1993. Interview A (1) 4.3.97.

[152] This was a view expressed by the leader of the Romani Bah Foundation. Interview B (2) 17.9.97.

[153] Kanev, *op. cit.*

statement on xenophobic acts made by the Ministry of the Interior in April 1995 demonstrated their eagerness to be seen as committed to the welfare of the more vulnerable groups within their borders, while at the same time not spelling out any specific policies:

> *The Ministry of the Interior is firmly resolved to take all the necessary measures in exercising its lawful powers to uncover and prevent such acts [of vandalism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism], to maintain public order and safeguard the citizens' rights and freedoms.*
>
> *We will not tolerate any attempt to discredit the aspiration of the Republic of Bulgaria to equal, honourable membership of the European and global community.*[154]

In line with these various agreements and in the light of declarations made by Western states, such as the US State Department's report in 1996 that identified "the degrading treatment of Gypsies as one of the most serious violations of human rights in Bulgaria", Bulgaria must assure its Western 'neighbours' that it is serious about the protection of its minority populations.[155] The UDF government elected in 1997, therefore, went one step further and signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in October of that year, but has yet to ratify it. Although its main thrust is directed towards the Turkish minority, it also has implications for the Gypsy minority.

One example of the Bulgarian government being more supportive of Gypsy rights was its agreement to partake in a round table aimed at addressing the Roma question in Bulgaria.[156] The Round Table was organised by the Human Rights Project, a type B NGO, on October 3 1998 in order to discuss a programme draft entitled "For Equal Participation of the Roma in Bulgarian society".[157] The overall aim was to work out a

---

[154] BTA news agency, Sofia, 20 April, 1995.
[155] BBC News, 10 May, 1996.
[156] Radio Free Europe, Bulgaria, 14 January, 1999.
[157] The HRP also helped put together the initial programme draft based on input from Gypsy organisations throughout Bulgaria.

new social contract between the Bulgarian Roma and the Bulgarian government. Representatives of the Bulgarian government were present, including Mr. Vesselin Metodiev, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Education, and members of the National Council on Ethnic and Demographic Questions at the Council of Ministers and the Parliamentary Human Rights Commission. Leaders from Romani political movements and NGOs were also present, coupled with Bulgarian human rights NGOs and journalists.

The European Roma Rights Centre, however, viewed this roundtable as little more than a political gesture on the part of the government who are keen to be seen as supporting the Gypsy population in the light of upcoming elections.[158] Similar conclusions could be drawn from the latest Government initiative in Sofia regarding the establishment of a database for Gypsies in 10 surrounding towns. Led by Dr. Antonii Galabov from the Institute of Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the hope is to make this database a reliable source of information for policy making.[159] Ultimately, however, until the UDF signs the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and makes legally binding all those conventions that have already been signed, such initiatives as these will remain superficial.[160]

Ultimately we have to ask whether by the inclusion of their rights into existing frameworks and with the signing by governments of various international conventions, the interests of Gypsies are genuinely represented. Structural obstacles to equality, made worse by market reform, continue to perpetuate unemployment and poverty. In this context, attempts to incorporate the interests of Gypsies into the process of

---

[158] European Roma Rights Centre, Press Release *"Round Table on the Roma Question in Bulgaria."* October 5 1998.

[159] Radio Free Europe, *op. cit.*

[160] E. Marushiakova, "Cultural Traditions of the Gypsies in Present-Day Bulgaria and the Attitude of the Central and Local Authorities Toward Them." In Council of Europe, *Gypsies in the Locality*, Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1994.

democratisation, have at best remained problematic. It is often the case that in national contexts issues specific to Gypsies are only taken on board in pre-election fever in an attempt to win votes, only to be dropped immediately after.[161] The motivations for improving safeguards against xenophobia and racism at the national level therefore appear to be dominated by government aspirations for entering into relations with Western Europe.

4.10 Conclusion

Bulgaria offers a useful case study for tracking the evolution of official policy towards Gypsies in line with its particular economic, political and social development. Living in the Balkans, Gypsies have experienced three key phases of development, Ottoman rule, national independence and Communism. Processes of nation-building which characterised post-liberation development, coupled with the Communist drive towards modernisation, posed particular problems for the formal acceptance of Gypsies into Bulgarian society as a distinct ethnic group. The collapse of Communism has seen the re-framing of the 'Gypsy question' into a new model of development. Rather than assimilative and paternalistic policies towards Gypsies, policies of inclusion are now defined in terms of minority rights framed within the democratic language of integration and participation.

Many activists recognise the importance of placing Gypsy rights alongside other minority rights. However, problems persist in terms of their definition and the articulation of appropriate rights. Undermined by inconsistency and the implementation of discriminatory policies elsewhere, the 'inclusion' of Gypsies into the framework of human rights, has offered only a partial solution to their so-called exclusion. While at a

[161] During an interview with Ventzislave Mishev, A (2) 12.3.97 leader of the *Roma Foundation* (a small scale NGO based in Rousse), he spoke of how on numerous occasions his foundation had been approached by political parties, but only during pre-election campaigns.

rhetorical level the 'Gypsy question' may have changed considerably, the types of solutions that are called for have changed relatively little. Indeed, at one end of the spectrum there is evidence that for some actors the solution to the 'Gypsy question' remains that of assimilation. However, at the other end of the spectrum lies the belief that the discourse on human and minority rights creates the necessary space for articulating the struggle for a recognition of multicultural rights. The following chapter draws on these debates in its analysis of the NGO sector in Eastern Europe as one of the key responses to the 'Gypsy question' since 1989.

CHAPTER 5

STRATEGIES OF INCLUSION: THE NGO SECTOR

5.1 Introduction

As the previous chapters demonstrate strategies of inclusion for Gypsies, whether it be in the form of enforced assimilation or integration are nothing new. With respect to Gypsies throughout Europe it is policies that they are very familiar with and, in most cases, wary of. However, the promotion by international institutions and Western governments of a seemingly progressive, people-centred, strategy of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with its working premise of participation, 'bottom-up' agency and community development, seems to represent a new approach to inclusion and one that many leading Gypsies are eagerly subscribing to. We can see the involvement of Gypsies in the NGO sector as part of a wider on-going process of cultural and political mobilisation as identified by Gheorghe and Acton. They see mobilisation in whatever form as an inevitable response on the part of Gypsy elites to the hegemonic process of homogenisation inherent to the framework of 'national cultures'. In this respect, they argue that post-Communist developments in Eastern Europe in terms of new rights in areas of cultural self-organisation have provided "a new and promising context for experiments with Romany ethnic culture."[1]

Indeed, if we take the plethora of NGOs riding on the wave of foreign finance as a suitable indication of cultural and political mobilisation it appears that a new age of civil participation is emerging in Bulgaria and indeed across all the countries of the former Communist bloc. However, while opening up new avenues for proactive self-help for the 'Gypsy elite', the NGO sector does not in itself secure the participation of all Gypsies. Further still, as a tool for mobilisation it is laden down with conceptual and ideological

[1] Nicolae Gheorghe, Introductory Report, "Dealing with Multiculturality: Minority, Ethnic, National and Human Rights", Council of Europe (ed.), *Gypsies in the Locality*, Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1994, pp. 95-97.

baggage coupled with the practical problems of implementation and legitimacy. As a result, we have to be cautious of the all too common practice of linking NGOs with democracy and/or civil society. As we shall show, for Gypsies in Eastern Europe in general and Bulgaria in particular the link between NGOs and democracy (or civil society) is not always clear nor indeed entirely relevant to their situation.

An analysis of the key issues that surround the NGO debate forms the essence of this chapter, which will provide the necessary groundwork for a more focused discussion in chapters 6-8 on the ideological and practical implications of adopting an NGO strategy for Gypsies in Bulgaria. Beginning with a broad analysis of the general debates and difficulties of the NGO sector and its translation to the post-1989 East European context, and in particular Bulgaria, we then explore the role of NGOs on the international scene. From this basis it will then be possible in the proceeding chapters to question the assumptions that underpin support for NGOs on two counts: first, by showing that the problem that Gypsies in Eastern Europe face is not necessarily one of social exclusion; and second, by questioning the assumption that NGOs provide the 'answer' for excluded groups through participation.

5.2 The NGO debate: Changing rationale and meanings

We have argued that although the precise form of social inequality can change as a product of society's structures it has been an ever present factor in the societies of Eastern Europe before and since the transition. In these terms it can be argued that by working within rather than against this framework, NGOs (even those which from the outset may seek to challenge unequal structures) rarely penetrate the structures of inequality to any great depth. Ultimately, 'participation' as practised within the NGO sector aims to mobilise local communities rather than wider society and some see this as its virtues. As Hayward puts it, "serious mass participation has failed largely because it

runs counter to the aims of the most dominant [...] mass participation has therefore been little, if at all, tried."[2] But the daily obstacles that the NGO sector are confronted with disguise problems that go to the very heart of the political economic structure in which it operates. The NGO sector can be seen most crudely as a hegemonic device in that it allows for some degree of autonomous activity, yet ultimately is allowed in order to help maintain the status quo. Of course, within this there is a whole range of possible activities some of which have more radical potential than others.

The economic crisis in Eastern Europe and its devastating impact of rising poverty and social inequality has raised acute concerns among national and international policymakers in terms of finding appropriate policy responses. The framework out of which the concept of social exclusion has emerged (i.e. the idea of a residual category) is also informing (both directly and indirectly) policy initiatives in Eastern Europe. It is possible to observe a tendency towards ideas of integration and equal rights at the expense of any questioning of the validity of market reform. In this context the existing NGO sector represents a particularly attractive model with its working premise of participation and community development, coupled with its claims to offering a refreshing alternative to the stifling bureaucracy of government.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been a leading actor in the 'transition' and with its recent development of the Human Development Index laid the necessary groundwork for promoting the NGO sector. This index offers a 'composite summary indicator' of development, which takes into account such factors as literacy, longevity and standard of living. Their concern in line with conventional 'liberal wisdom' rests on the belief that NGOs can enhance human capabilities and ensure that people

[2] Quoted in Rachel Hinton, "NGOs as Agents of Change? The Case of the Bhutanese Refugee Programme", *Cambridge Anthropology*, 19 (1), 1996. p. 34.

make full use of them, thus helping individuals to help themselves.[3] In this way NGOs are eagerly held up as a key element of 'human development' having, in their view, a comparative advantage over government or profit making agencies as 'instruments of civil society'.[4]

As well as their contribution to civil society, NGOs are praised for their potential as service providers. Public-goods theory suggests that NGOs exist to 'fill in the gaps' left by state welfare, a variation of the 'government-failure' theory.[5] The Council of Europe also subscribes to this view of NGOs. In their discussion on street children, NGOs were proposed as 'essential' and as "[filling] the gap" left by official authorities.[6] The intention is for NGOs to counterbalance problems of unequal access caused by inadequate state cover. Another example of this particular view of NGOs, but from quite a different source is that presented by Dieke Buijs.[7] He sees the setting up of a development (or participatory) project as the answer to inadequate welfare provision brought about by three types of 'access problems': first, lack of sufficient coverage of services; second, the price that one has to pay for services may be too high (for a family the education of their children means losing a part of their labour power); and third, service institutions are often not attuned to lower social strata (pressure for quick results often means that they

---

[3] See for example Fowler's discussion which notes how from the early 1990s the aid system has created a link between the third sector and civil society through the adoption of 'good governance' as a development objective and political condition for assistance. Alan Fowler, "Wither the Third Sector? A Response to Estelle James", *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organisations*, 9 (3), 1998. p. 206.

[4] Peter J. Spiro, "New Global Communities: Nongovernmental Organisations in International Decision-Making Institutions", *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter, 1995.

[5] Susan A. Ostrander, "The Problem of Poverty and Why Philanthropy Neglects it." In Virginia.A. Hodgkinson, Richard.W. Lyman *et al.*, (eds.), *The Future of the Non-Profit Sector*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, London, 1989; Henry Hansmann, "Economic Theories of Nonprofit Organisation." In W. W. Powell (ed.), *The NonProfit Sector - A Research Handbook*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1987; Helmut K. Anheier, "Indigenous Voluntary Associations, Nonprofits, and Development in Africa." In Powell (ed.), *ibid.*

[6] Council of Europe, *Street Children - Study Group on Street Children*, Steering Committee on Social Policy, Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1994.

[7] Dieke Buijs, "On Admittance, Access, Cooperation and Participation: the Basic Concepts of the 'Access and Participation' Research." In Benno Galjart and D. Buiji (eds.) *Participation of the Poor in Development - Contributions to a Seminar*, Leiden Development Studies, 2, 1982.

direct themselves to more approachable groups with the least problems). The development project, he argues, offers a means to overcome these 'access problems' in that it adapts itself to the situation of the lower social strata and is able to seek out, together with the community, alternative routes to services.

The idea of finding ways to co-operate with those of the community who are 'denied access', and allowing them to participate forms one of the central defining aspects of the NGO rationale. However, the vagueness and inter-changeability of the concepts 'access' and 'participation' serve to reveal the dangers of relying on them to solve problems of 'social exclusion'. Studies were undertaken in developing countries during the 1970s and 1980s in an attempt to resolve some of these ambiguities, where specific thresholds for access, such as geographical, financial and cultural distances, were identified.[8] This multi-layered approach to analysing the ways in which certain groups were 'distanced' from important fields of activity has partly informed current exclusion theory and its evolving NGO strategy.

Current support for NGOs at the formal level tends to rest on a commitment to fighting social exclusion. Given the broad appeal of this theory support comes from a variety of different disciplines and practitioners, injecting this sector with a multitude of agendas and functions according to who it is adopted for and by. The ambiguity of the expectations placed upon the NGO sector comes across in its literature, which, produced by both donors and participants, rests on a set of assumptions that often contradict each other. For example, a study evaluating the impact of NGOs on rural poverty alleviation in Bangladesh noted that, "With one voice they go to the poor with something to offer;

[8] For example, H. Y. Buijs, *Access and Participation*, ICA-Publicatie, 33, Leiden, 1979.

with another they say that the poor should stand on their own feet."[9] Eastes, Binney *et al.* in their study of the erosion of legitimacy of the NGO sector in the West discuss the problems that arise from the dilemma between the claim that NGOs are at once independent of the state, yet reliant on government support.[10] Burgess, too, draws attention to an obvious contradiction, this time with the NGO sector in Eastern Europe, where he notes that NGOs are celebrated as both a force for change and a basis for tradition.[11]

5.3 Participation 'from below'

The question of 'change' versus 'tradition' is an on-going, yet relatively under studied aspect of the NGO sector. In devising strategies of inclusion, NGOs are increasingly resting on traditional ideas of participation, which are 'polished up' with 'new' politically correct concepts of 'integration' and 'conflict resolution'. Multilateral institutions like the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) have led the way in championing these concepts. UNRISD began working with ideas of 'participation' in the 1970s. Their stated objective was to find ways of allowing 'the disadvantaged' to participate actively rather than passively in the advancement and control of their own interests and livelihood. The traditional stages of participation included: information sharing; consultation; decision making; and what is considered as the most advanced, initiating action.[12]

---

[9] M. Stiefal and M. Wolfe, *A Voice for the Excluded - Popular Participation in Development: Utopia or Necessity?*, Zed Books Ltd (UNRISD), London and New Jersey, 1994. p. 208.

[10] Carroll L. Estes, Elizabeth A. Binney and Linda A. Bergthold, "How the Legitimacy of the Sector Has Eroded." In Hodgkinson, Lyman *et al. op. cit.* There has been a recent surge within the NGO literature on the question of the NGO's closeness to funders and also on the question of the NGO becoming a substitute for governments. See for example, Fowler, *op. cit.*

[11] Adam Burgess, *Divided Europe: The New Domination of the East*, Pluto Press, London, 1997.

[12] Samual Paul, *Community Participation in Development Projects - the World Bank Experience*, World Bank Discussion Papers No. 6, Washington D.C. 1987.

The idea of participation as developed here has also formed the backbone to the work of many academics and practitioners currently studying and using social exclusion theory. Steifel and Wolfe however, are keen to draw attention to the dangers of taking on board concepts from a particular era and geographical context without radically re-working them first,

> *to what extent is the renewed currency of participation as a bannerword a cyclical phenomenon fuelled by the need of politicians and experts to offer something apparently new, marked by the same evasions and ambiguities as in the 1960s and 1970s?*[13]

As the title of their book suggests - *A Voice for the Excluded - Popular Participation in Development: Utopia or Necessity?* - Steifel and Wolfe do not discount participation altogether. However, their findings that the transition from non-participation to participation is not linear, that there are structural limits to participation, such as national policy, and that there are disparities in rationalities between the different social actors, have led them to argue that there is a need to re-evaluate this 'pseudo-participatory rhetoric'. Hinton too, warns us of the complexity of this term, which in its simplification is vulnerable to abuse. In her discussion of NGOs in Bhutan, she points out that those who claim to use the strategy of participation often fail to distinguish between individual involvement and that of the community. Each serves a different purpose, the former aims to achieve a psychological impact of personal empowerment, while the latter is seen as merely a means to an end.[14]

While portrayed as a neutral tool, participation can be used to serve political and economic ends. Rifkin in her study of community participation in health programmes argues that the participation process operates on a continuum governed by the specifics of a given community and its interactions with formal structures. Whether the motivation

---

[13] Steifal and Wolfe, *op. cit.* p. 196.
[14] Hinton, *op. cit.*

behind the project is at one end of the scale to improve health service delivery or at the other end to empower the poor ultimately determines the practices and outcomes of a project.[15] Woelk in his study of the use of participation in health programmes, goes so far as to argue that "fostering the rhetoric of community participation suited the ruling classes to create the illusion of democracy."[16]

Galjart and Buijs outline four different goals of participation, which to a large extent supports Woelk's argument: first, while giving the impression of democracy, participation can be used to make a given community accept a 'new idea' through consultation; second, it can lead to co-operation in the economic sphere; third, self-help as part of participation can be used to justify beneficiaries contributing to the costs of a project; and fourth, participants can become members of an association of a set of rules in terms of contributions and rewards.[17] In a similar vein, Paul draws attention to a World Bank restricted circulation document designed for internal use only which clearly outlines one goal of the World Bank - to use community participation primarily in order to retrieve some of the high costs.[18]

Although by the end of the 1980s, the World Bank was showing increasing interest in the use of NGOs in their projects and finances world-wide, there was still at this time little reference made to empowerment or capacity building in World Bank Policy documents.[19] However, by the end of the 1990s their support of NGO related projects had increased

[15] Susan B. Rifkin, "Lessons From Community Participation in Health Programmes", *Health Policy and Planning*, 1 (3) 1986. pp. 240-249.

[16] B. G. Woelk, "Cultural and Structural Influences in the Creation of Participation in Community Health Programmes", *Social Science and Medicine*, 35 (4), 1992. p. 420.

[17] Galjart and Buijs, *op. cit.*

[18] IBRD, OMS, No. 2.25 "Cost Recovery Policies for Public Sector Projects: General Aspects", Paul, *op. cit.*

[19] Between 1988 and 1990, the number of Bank-supported projects involving NGOs had more than tripled. Aubrey Williams (a WB staff member), "A Growing Role for NGOs in Development", *Finance and Development*, December, 27 (4), 1990.

further still and with it, it seems the development of a more sophisticated approach.[20] Nevertheless, internal documents such as the one above, with its clear emphasis on the outcomes of participation rather than on the process of empowerment itself suggest that the World Bank approach ultimately falls at the extreme end of Rifkin's continuum.

These studies all serve to reveal the complexities and different ideological uses that underpin the concept of participation. The very nature of participatory methods is that they take a long time, i.e. the need to build trust and to work with multiple actors. The long-term emphasis, however, conflicts with the high-turnover and short term contracts of 'projects' that structure the NGO approach. This highlights that the NGO sector cannot in itself hold 'the answer', but instead offers just one aspect of participation.

Another debate that permeates the world of NGOs is how far they merely reproduce existing social inequalities. Various studies attempt to evaluate the impact of NGOs in different situations many of which reveal that those community members who need most help are often those that continue to be left out. For example, Robinson in his study of rural poverty alleviation NGOs in India revealed that "the destitute, the handicapped and the chronically sick, who constituted the poorest stratum of rural society, were invariably beyond the reach of economic programmes," and as a result "conditions of the poorest have not changed dramatically." [21] This reveals a problem not only of ineffectiveness but of reproducing the unequal structure of rural and also urban society.

---

[20]According to World Bank figures, between 1973-1988 only 6 per cent of Bank financed projects involved NGOs, in 1993 this had risen to over a third and by 1994 to nearly a half. Although this was maintained into the financial year of 1995, but soon after the total number of Bank supported projects with NGO involvement began to drop reported at 38 per cent in 1997. The World Bank Group web site entitled "For Non-governmental Organizations/Civil Society", <http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/forngovs/htm> (accessed January 1999).

[21] M. A. Robinson, *Evaluating the Impact of NGOs in Rural Poverty Alleviation: India Case Study*, London, Overseas Development Institute, 1991. p. 119.

The negative aspects of: NGO ineffectiveness; crisis in legitimacy; the reproduction of inequality; the ambiguity and vagueness of the concepts; and their potential for manipulation, coupled with the positive aspects of: contributing to civil society; representing potential alternatives to the state; having scope for filling in gaps left by inadequate state welfare; and having a higher degree of responsiveness to local communities with possibilities for their direct involvement, are some of the factors that feed into the following discussion on the application of NGO strategies to the specific situation of Gypsies in Bulgaria.

5.4 The application of NGO strategies to Eastern Europe

The parameters of the arguments about NGOs and their role in development and participation shift according to their context. In the US, debates continue to thrive about what criteria is best for distinguishing between nonprofits, charities, and philanthropy. This is further complicated by factors of commercialisation and links with governmental structures. In the East European context this theoretical concern with defining NGOs is replaced with a more practical concern about effectiveness and accountability. The structure of external and more specifically Western funding imposes a whole new set of pressures on emerging organisations, who, faced with the obligation to justify and qualify their funding, have to produce evidence of 'results' even in those cases where the projects have been relatively short lived.[22] The enforced emphasis on meeting the requirements of their donors, was a point being made in the 1980s with NGOs in Africa, "NGO organisational structures just seem to have emerged from their (funding) history rather than being appropriately designed for the purpose of micro-development."[23]

---

[22] For example, in line with Western criteria, the European Roma Rights Centre, Hungary, one of the few donor agencies within Eastern Europe, offers 12 month funding for NGO projects with 'anticipated short-term impact'. ERRC web site <http://www.errc.org> (accessed November 1998).

[23] Alan Fowler, "Building Partnerships between Northern and Southern Development NGOs: Issues for the Nineties", *Journal of SID*, 23, 1988, quoted in Hinton, *op. cit.* p. 44.

Despite obvious differences between national contexts, similarities have been sought between countries in the Third World and the 'transition' countries of Eastern Europe, not so much in identifying potential problems, but in order to justify the application of development concepts from the former to the latter. Evidence of this was apparent during my fieldwork in Bulgaria. More established NGOs were beginning to embark on family planning projects and encouraging locals to set up small scale co-operatives - programmes originally designed for 'developing' countries. One particular NGO was taking direct lessons from an NGO in India, with whom they had established links via a Dutch grant-making foundation.[24] A representative of the Indian NGO had been to visit their Bulgarian partners on a number of occasions giving advice and support. This, coupled with Rifkin's study, which shows how participation strategies grow out of specific situations, raises some interesting questions about the extent to which such strategies as participation and community development can be universally applied.[25]

Perhaps, more importantly, it forces us to address the social, political and economic context in which NGO 'inclusion' strategies are implemented in order to understand fully their effectiveness. Transition in Eastern Europe and in particular Bulgaria is specifically about the adoption of a market economy and all that it entails. Yet, the specificity of this context does not preclude the use of NGO strategies as developed in Third World countries in terms of alleviating extreme poverty and helping in areas of employment and education. Sethi, for example, in his discussion of some of the obstacles NGOs have to deal with in India reveal issues that are also relevant to NGOs in Bulgaria. He observes that: first, NGOs often remained small and operated in restricted areas; second, that NGOs were dependent on external funding, and so had to accept programmes that suited

---

[24] Information provided in their reports and through general contact. B (3)

[25] Rifkin, *op. cit.*

funding requirements rather than local needs; and third, that there was a distinct lack of understanding on the part of surrounding political actors.[26]

5.5 Western intervention

As discussed in chapter 3 the extent of economic decline in Eastern Europe, and in particular Bulgaria, has been vast and has had huge implications for widening social inequality. This is a factor that must be taken into account when considering the different roles open to NGOs in Eastern Europe. The combination of an increase in demand brought about the collapse of welfare and of employment with the lack of available resources for a strong NGO sector, coupled with the popular argument that Eastern Europe has to 'learn' again about civil society, those in the West have been painted a rather dismal picture about the state of Eastern Europe. While reluctant to deny the extent of these problems, it is still interesting to point out that for many of those active within the Bulgarian NGO sector the prospect is not quite so desperate. Whether this can be put down to false optimism or to a genuine belief that the NGO can work is not for this thesis to say. However, what is certain is that economic collapse coupled with new political freedoms has intensified the paradox whereby the NGO sector renowned for its commitment to local grass root initiatives must almost entirely rely on external top-down funding. This dependency carries with it the drawbacks mentioned above, especially the issue of the lack of freedom and autonomy on the part of the NGO itself.

Western funding is the main characteristic of the NGO sector in Eastern Europe. However, given the huge gap in wealth between the countries of Western and Eastern Europe the nature of this funding is asymmetrical. For the impoverished economies of Eastern Europe relatively small-scale Western funding represents a large and vital source

---

[26] Harsh Sethi, "Groups in New: Politics and Transformation", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 19 (7), 1984. pp. 305-316.

of financial support. As a result, institutions such as the EU, can confidently implement various projects specifically for Eastern Europe without having to put up too much capital. Altogether for 1997 the total funding made available for all the countries of Eastern Europe was just under ECU 140 million, or 100 million pounds. Funding is allocated through various departments in the following areas: European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) Emergency Humanitarian aid to the people of Central and Eastern European countries (ECU 98 million for 1997); Relations with Central and Eastern Europe countries - Aid for economic restructuring of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Phare) and Programme for Democracy in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (supporting NGOs is a fundamental aspect of this with an emphasis on the 'transfer of expertise and experience between partner NGOs' - ECU 30 million for 1997 plus ECU 11.5 million designed especially for the development of civil society).[27]

Increasing concern over accession of Eastern Europe to the EU adds another dimension to this issue of funding. The European Commission, it seems, is being pushed internally to adopt a more cautious and strategic (i.e. selective) approach to funding NGOs based on who is and who is not to be considered at this stage for EU accession. In the words of Lester, "Whereas the original objective was to promote democracy in the candidate countries through NGO funding, all funding now has to be seen in the context of the Commission's agenda for the accession." [28] The overlap between politics and economics is most explicit in this case, which serves to validate those funding bodies who claim to stand outside of conventional party politics.

---

[27] EC, *Digest of Community Resources Available for Financing the Activities of NGOs and Other Governmental and/or Decentralised Bodies Representing Civil Society in the Fields of Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid.* VII/207/97 EN, 1997.

[28] Colin Norman Walker (ed.), "NGOs Have a Role to Play in Building a Civil Society", *European Dialogue*, The European Commission bi-monthly magazine for Central Europe and the Baltics, March-April, No.2, 1998 <http://europa.eu.iny/en/comm/dg10/infcom/eur-dial/frameset_ backlist.html> (accessed May 1998).

5.6 Soros funding

Private channels of Western funding are often heralded as welcome alternatives to bureaucratic government-led ventures. The US based Soros Foundation, in particular, is seen as progressive if compared to those donors that are closely tied to governmental structures, such as the Project on Ethnic Relations or USAID. Supporters of Soros go so far as to claim that it represents a "positive example of a different way of giving aid to Eastern Europe" in its distinctive emphasis on "genuine localism".[29] Soros, to a large extent, has distributed its funding more widely in the form of nation-wide networks of independent institutions, which, run by 'locals', are able to give advice and support training programmes, scholarships and fellowships. This differs strongly from more conventional agencies, such as USAID. Although it does have offices in Eastern Europe they are staffed by North Americans, rather than locals. Soros also appear to be a little more forthcoming in its allocation of funds. However, standing at an annual total of US$17 million in 1991 for the entire region of Eastern Europe, its scope for enabling profound change is still rather limited.[30]

Furthermore, we have to question the very philosophy of Soros which is similar to the paternalism of its apparently lesser respected US counterparts. Burgess, for example, rebuffs claims that Soros is a different kind of American interventist. The emphasis on instilling 'civil society', he argues, is still there and is one that the likes of the World Bank and IMF are also latching on to. By focusing on the vulnerable and ideas of bottom-up decentralisation, Burgess argues that the Soros approach is nothing more than an attempt to 'go above' criticism in its crusade for the establishment of civil society, which he describes as a "catch all euphemism for shaping the East in the image of the

---

[29] Thomas Carothers, "Aiding PostCommunist Societies: A Better Way?" *Problems of Post-Communism.* September-October, 1996. Website <http://www.ceip.org/people/ caroaid.htm> (accessed April 1997).

[30] R. Beshel, *Conference Report: The Role of US Foundations in East/Central Europe*, Ford Foundation, New York, 1991, quoted in Susan L. Q. Flaherty, "Philanthropy Without Borders: US Private Foundation Activity in Eastern Europe", *Voluntus*, 3, 1992.

West."[31] Indeed, ironically the main sources of Soros' funding can be seen to contradict his highly publicised ideological commitment to Popper's 'open society' in that the acquisition and accumulation of his wealth as a hedge fund manager predominantly rested on the active participation in the very capitalist political economy that underpins existing inequalities in Eastern Europe;[32] a contradiction that has become more apparent as his own disillusionment with the instability of market capitalism has grown even as his business works within it.[33]

However, while it is important to assess the governing philosophy of such institutions, one must also be careful to avoid falling into the trap of over-simplifying 'Western intervention'. The idea that there is an agenda on the part of 'the West' fails to address the multiple actors that are involved at different levels of the economic, social and political relations that connect both these parts of Europe and, indeed, the USA.[34] It is possible to observe, for example, that the methodology of Soros is in fact marginally different from more mainstream and government oriented North American foundations, such as Project on Ethnic Relations. In recent years Soros' sponsorship of Gypsy NGOs has included support for advocacy organisations which often are critical of other NGOs receiving Soros' support. Soros, in line with its commitment to encouraging autonomy among disadvantaged groups, regards this as a creative, rather than destructive tension.

---

[31] Burgess, *op. cit.* p. 166.

[32] Even though some would argue that Popper's idea of an 'open society' is compatible with an inequality generating capitalism, in that its 'openness' allows for reform and struggle from within.

[33] See for example, George Soros (interview with), "The International Financial Crisis - Interview", *Challenge*, 42 (2), March-April 1999, in which he expresses a concern with the market, seeing it as imposing a major threat to open societies.

[34] See for example, Bob Deacon, *Global Social policy: International Organisations and the Future of Welfare*, SAGE, London, 1997.

5.7 NGOs in Eastern Europe: Traditions and development.

As the previous section demonstrates, the translation of NGOs to the post 1989 East European context has had various repercussions, not least of which has been the heavy influence of its Western financiers. Those working within the indigenous NGO sector together with East European governments are also keen to play up the value of the pre-Communist traditions of voluntarism and charity organisations, which they argue add a depth and credibility to the emerging NGO sector in Eastern Europe. This search into the past allows for those involved within the NGO sector to talk of a 'rebirth' or a 'renaissance' of civil society.

According to many reports, Eastern Europe is undergoing a 'renaissance' of the third sector.[35] This does have some resonance when we consider the rate of growth in numbers of NGOs for two of the most prosperous countries in Eastern Europe, Hungary and the former Czechoslovakia. In Hungary, for example, there was an increase from 400 registered foundations in 1989 to 6,000 in 1991. Likewise, in the former Czechoslovakia, over 9,000 NGOs emerged between 1989 and 1992.[36] However, if we compare NGOs per head of population with the UK, which has a very strong NGO sector, it is possible to observe that the number of NGOs in Eastern Europe remains relatively small. In 1990 the UK had some 350,000 NGOs and 172,000 registered charities, which even with its population of nearly 60 million meant that there was 0.3 NGOs to every person, i.e. one NGO for every three hundred people. In contrast, the number of NGOs per head of population in both Hungary and Czechoslovakia in 1991 was 0.06, i.e. there was one NGO for every 6 thousand people in each of these countries.

---

[35] Randall J. Davis, *The Rebirth of the Nonprofit Sector in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, Center for Civil Society International, Washington, 1996.

[36] Frank Laczko, "Social Policy and the Third Sector in East-Central Europe." In Stein Ringen and Wallace (eds.), *Societies in Transition: East-Central Europe Today*, Vol. I, Avebury and Aldershot, 1994.

Although small in number, NGOs in Eastern Europe consist of a huge range of diverse organisations including non-profitable, voluntary and charitable organisations. They operate at different levels, some with more funding than others, some with national structures, others more localised, some overtly political, while others are based on specific cultural agendas. The kind of issues that these NGOs work with range from health, housing and education, to culture, religion and the environment. It is easy to see, therefore, how the heterogeneous nature of this emerging sector in Eastern Europe and its emphasis on multidimensional approaches lends itself easily to social exclusion theory.

5.8 Traditions of voluntarism in Eastern Europe

An increasingly common approach to analysing NGOs in Eastern Europe is to track their evolution and subsequent nullification under Communism where pre-war traditions of voluntary and charity organisations are used as a reference point.[37] Laczko, for example, draws attention to the existence of over 14,000 voluntary association in pre-war Hungary and bemoans their subsequent destruction under Communism, during which only the Red Cross was allowed officially to exist.[38] Various factors have been presented to explain why voluntarism across Eastern Europe underwent a huge decline during the Communist period. While the banning of all non-governmental activity in most countries by the Communist Party remained an obvious factor, others have also been explored. First, there is the idea that the obligation to 'volunteer' for official state organisations, such as the Youth section in its various forms, together with state intervention in any kind of association, killed any desire for 'volunteering'. The lack of time is another factor, where a mixture of working, queuing, and participating in the second economy,

---

[37] Helmut K. Anheier and Eckhard Priller, "The Non-Profit Sector in East Germany Before and After Reunification", *Voluntus*, 2 (1) 1991; Davis, *op. cit.*

[38] Laczko, *op. cit.*

together with domestic duties, literally prevented people from taking on extra activities. Third, a general mistrust of institutions and of each other brought about by the encouragement of spying on neighbours, coupled with a reliance on the state for provision of welfare meant that society in general was unwilling to look towards voluntarism or community organisations for meeting shared needs. Of course, there were always exceptions. However, since 1989, the legacy of the Communist regime combined with a lack of resources, inadequate legal structures, and lack of legitimacy has created weak foundations on which to build a NGO sector.

Western donors have attempted to counteract this by setting up funds aimed specifically at the NGO sector. The EU, for example, has three programmes aimed specifically at the development of NGOs: *LIEN* (Link Inter-European NGOs) is the main branch of this programme, which aims to provide support via NGOs to social assistance operations for urban and rural population groups at risk and with little, if any, access to other forms of aid (ECU 10 million for 1996, 1997). *Partnership and Institution Building* is designed to help sustainable grass roots initiatives and reinforce the resources of private or public non-profit organisations, particularly those involved in economic activity (ECU 11 million 1996, ECU 10 million 1997). Finally, there is *Democracy*, which has its own budget and although voted through by Parliament is co-ordinated by Phare. It supports projects aimed at promoting respect for democratic principles and procedures in government, parliamentary and administrative bodies and various groups in society, such as professional bodies, associations, and the media (ECU 10 million 1996, 1997).[39] By 1994, the EU had already committed ECU 4.3 billion to the Phare programme, which holds NGO development as a specific focus of its assistance. EU Funding for the 'development of civil society' in Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia

[39] EC, *op. cit.* pp. 86-7.

and Lithuania amounted to a total of ECU 11,500,000 with ECU 1.5 million given to Bulgarian NGOs.[40] In the spring of 1997, The Phare *Civil Society Development Foundation* allocated 880,000 ECU to Bulgaria, which were distributed through a number of NGOs based on a combination of humanitarian aid and self-help initiatives.[41]

5.9 Obstacles to the NGO sector

The NGO sector across Eastern Europe represents a hive of activity and is comprised of a multitude of agendas. However, the combination of external and internal constraints within the specific context of transition in Eastern Europe has posed serious impediments to the development of a solid working NGO sector. An on-going survey carried out since 1990 by the Regional Environmental Center (REC) for Central and Eastern Europe revealed that problems of under assistance and poor relations with governments permeate the NGO sector across Eastern Europe. Out of 3,000 environmental NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe 62 per cent responded to the questionnaire. The majority of these (about 75 per cent) reported unstable, poor or very poor finances, with nearly half of individual annual NGO budgets amounting to no more than US$1,000. The number who claimed to have no or at best poor relations with government was very high. The survey also revealed that NGOs were concentrated in the more prosperous countries, that of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. As a result, NGOs in the other less prosperous countries of Eastern Europe remained relatively neglected. The main findings were that the NGOs covered in the survey were entirely dependent on external funding for the continuation of their work. The report concluded that "assistance is going in the right direction, but the problems are still not fully solved. We need NGOs to solve them, and they still need our help."[42] The emphasis in this report was that the NGOs

---

[40] EC, *op. cit.*

[41] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *National Human Development Report - Bulgaria 1998. The State of Transition and the Transition of the State*, UNDP, Sofia, 1998.

[42] Regional Environment Center (REC), *Problems, Progress and Possibilities: A Needs Assessment of Environmental NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe*, REC, Hungary, 1998.

themselves should be responsible for solving societal problems, in this case environmental ones. The report's focus on the poor finances of most NGOs drew attention to practical problems of dependency. However, by simply identifying a series of obstacles that NGOs need to overcome, the report seemed to refrain from any direct tackling of the more fundamental problems brought about by the unequal nature of the relationship between NGOs and their donors.

Problems associated with NGOs in Eastern Europe and the structure of external funding are qualified by the donors in a number of ways. The responsibility for failures is often placed with the country involved rather than with the donors themselves. Western donors attempt to justify their marginal impact in practical terms with the counter-promotion of the Western ideal: a model of development, which they generously allow countries of Eastern Europe to follow. In the eyes of the donors, the day to day survival of NGOs and their degree of effectiveness essentially lies with the NGOs themselves. The logic of the argument is that, given the current state of economic collapse and the relative lack of experience, NGOs in Eastern Europe have a long way to go yet. Various 'reasons' are given as to why targets are not met and why NGOs fail to meet expectations. The legacy of Communism and the transition are taken as the leading reasons for NGO failures, which allow for projections, however ill-informed, to be made about future improvement. The implication is that current problems are simply 'teething' ones and accepted as an inevitable 'part of the process' of a painful, albeit necessary, phase of development.

Another popular argument that ties in with this is the idea that NGOs, in order to be successful, have to undergo a learning curve. This makes the introduction of remedies a conceivable task. In the view to securing the building blocks for a solid, working NGO sector, leaders are encouraged to partake in training courses with themes, such as 'how to

run an NGO' and 'conflict resolution'. The problems inherent in the sector such as: its ambiguous relationship to the government and business sectors; its insecure place within the socio-economic order; and the implications of cultural colonisation, are removed from the equation or dealt with only via superficial measures. As a consequence, the specific set of problems associated with programmes of inclusion is lost among the more general problems outlined above.

In many cases, NGOs have been restricted by an increasing burden being placed on them to act as distributors for emergency development aid. These responsibilities are increasingly dictating the agendas of NGOs in Eastern Europe.[43] This channelling of development aid reduces the role of NGOs to little more than 'delivery mechanisms', which organisations like the Red Cross are only too keen to take advantage of. In Bulgaria, regional project leaders from the Bulgarian Red Cross have adopted this view of NGOs, and they were happy to explain to me the relative ease with which they can now distribute aid to Gypsy communities, since the establishment of Gypsy NGOs in their area.[44]

Contrary to popular belief, this almost enforced dependency is not compensated for in terms of actual financial input. Grant making and funding from abroad, coupled with foreign direct investment, has been relatively modest during the 'transition'.[45] The United States is one of the key sources of funding for NGOs in Eastern Europe, yet, of the 7,000 active US foundations, there are little more than one hundred foundations which are seriously interested in grant making in this area.[46] Prominent foundations, such as the

---

[43] This is already the case in the 'Third World', where according to Clark 'Northern' NGOs collectively transfer to the 'South' more than the World Bank. John Clark, *Democratising Development*, Earthscan Publications, London, 1991.

[44] Interviews (Appendix 2): D (5) 19.9.97, D (5) 7.10.97

[45] Lazcko, *op. cit.*

[46] Flaherty, *op. cit.*

Ford Foundation, have proved popular for many NGOs across Eastern Europe and indeed among those included in my study. They have served to counteract some of the negative feelings harboured by East European citizens who have not failed to notice the lack of formal investment on the part of governments. But even Ford, a large donor foundation, has not been willing to commit more than 2 per cent of their annual grant-making budget to projects (normally scholarly exchanges and academic fellowships) to this region.[47] The scarcity of foundations willing to commit large amounts of money to Eastern Europe can partly be explained by the fact that public support for NGOs in their own countries has been dwindling. Despite an acknowledged increase in demand on NGOs, respondents to a survey in the USA overwhelmingly agreed that NGOs should not receive special treatment, such as tax advantages, and only 18 per cent indicated support for protecting the non-profit sector specifically.[48]

This dwindling of support for NGOs in the USA coupled with cut-backs in federal funding to non-profit organisation during the 1980s raises some interesting questions about the nature of the relationship between private and state activity. The most commonly held view of the relationship between the state and NGO activity is that while offering an alternative to the state, the NGO sector ultimately relies upon government support in order to fulfil its task of 'serving the needy'.[49] As government support for NGOs declines it appears that the inclination on the part of the public to contribute to NGOs also declines. The reasons for this go beyond the scope of this discussion. Nevertheless, in terms of support for East European funding, it is important to consider both the internal factors of economic decline and growing inequality, and the external factors of declining public support for NGOs in the West.

---

[47] Flaherty, *op. cit.*

[48] Carroll L. Estes *et al.*, *op. cit.* This survey, carried out in 1988, was taken from data produced by the Institute for Health and Ageing, which gathered information on attitudes regarding the changing roles of non-profit, for profit and public service sectors in the USA.

[49] Virginia Hodgkinson, "Key Challenges Facing the Non-Profit Sector." In Hodgkinson et al., *op. cit.*

Although the West is keen to encourage the development of 'civil society' and 'democracy' in the transition economies of Eastern Europe, there is a distinct reluctance on the part of Western foundations and institutions to carry the entire burden of real long term change. Faced with a legitimation crisis in their own country, and with the view of Eastern Europe as a 'burden', US foundations, in particular, receive little public support and are reduced to only a limited role. Ultimately, the response of Western foundations has been slow and their message remains that they can offer only marginal support. For those in Eastern Europe on the receiving end, this has meant that NGO funding forms only a fraction of the institutional support that is required.

One of the main consequences of this reduction in the outward flow of finance to NGOs abroad has been an increase in internal divisions within the East European NGO sector. As competition for funding between NGOs tightens, internal rivalry is aggravated. This has contributed to external scepticism and so to a crisis in legitimacy. Reports of corruption and patronage are rife. Wunker, for example, argued that at the start of the transition up to half of all foundations in Poland and Hungary were illicit, profit distributing tax shelters.[50] This view of the NGO sector as a seething world of corruption is a popular one and has nurtured a popular scepticism about how far the NGO sector really does represent an increase in voluntarism and altruism.

5.10 NGOs in Bulgaria: Traditions and development

The weakness of the economy coupled with the particular legacy of Communism has meant that compared with other parts of Eastern Europe, the NGO sector in Bulgaria has remained relatively small scale and narrow in scope. A major factor to consider when

---

[50] Stephen Wunker, "The Promise of Non-Profits in Poland and Hungary: An Analysis of Third Sector Renassiance", *Voluntus*, 2 (2), 1991.

discussing NGOs in Bulgaria in the 1990s is the context of major institutional crisis, and a weakening of central government. Since the collapse of Communism, the new external sponsors of the Bulgarian state, i.e. governments in the West, have shown a preference for a rather weak central governmental authority, in contrast to the former CPSU's preference for a strong central state. As a result, a vast array of private players have emerged which can be categorised into broadly two types: private business and non-profit NGOs. The first of these consists of a multitude of activities, some of which are seen as more corrupt than others, such as private insurance and security firms. The link of private business with growing corruption in Bulgarian society has been identified for example with the growing number of ex-professional sportsmen who are finding economic niches in 'Bulgaria's murky underworld'.[51] Like the NGO sector, this type of activity is dominated by Bulgarians, but it also involves Gypsies as customers, victims and perpetrators.

In contrast, many see the emergence of non-profit NGOs as examples of some of the more positive repercussions of state withdrawal. The NGO sector comprises a multitude of different organisations ranging from charities, philanthropic organisations, to businesses and those rooted in different churches, such as the Pentecostal Church. Despite these vast differences, NGOs in Bulgaria are taken collectively as having strong historical traditions and as offering an alternative to the illegality and corruption associated with the activities mentioned above. For some, the tradition of philanthropy can be traced back to the national revival in the nineteenth century.[52] Others go as far back as the Ottoman empire. Nikolov, for example, argues that the Christian faith and the Bulgarian language were preserved under Ottoman rule mainly because of donations

---

[51] See for example, Victor Gomez, "An Underworld of Wrestlers", News of note Across the Region, *Transition*, 9 August 1996. p. 2. This reports on how Dzhamov, president of the Bulgarian Wrestling Federation in Bulgaria, was arrested in 1996 for running rackets related to his insurance firm.

[52] UNDP, *op. cit.*

made by individuals and communities, which funded the building and maintenance of schools, churches and 'chitalishta' (community centres with library facilities). These "emerging positive traditions", he writes, "were then entirely abandoned with the coming to power of the BCP." In his evaluation of NGO in the latter years of the 1980s, Nikolov puts the emphasis on the vacuum left by the Communist period, an essential aspect of which, he argues, was the destruction of the Christian faith; a faith, he argues that was a "proven motivation for serving others".[53]

> *Any nonprofit, charitable, or philanthropic activity presupposes the existence of personalities and institutions capable of donating resources to benefit all the population of deprived members of the community. There are simply no such individuals, organisations and institutions under socialism.*[54]

However, this vacuum was not all-pervasive, as a number of underground organisations existed in Bulgaria during the 1980s, of which Gypsies were also a part. An interview with a member of an established NGO in Sliven, for example, revealed that he had been involved with the establishment of an illegal NGO in 1979, whose work involved the promotion of education and culture of Gypsies.[55] Likewise, Snavely locates the roots of the current NGO sector not so much in some pre-Communist ideal but as emerging during the very height of Communist control. He argues that the environmental protests of Rousse in 1987 opened up potential for unofficial outlets of political expression.[56]

The development of quasi-NGO activity under Communism was due to a series of factors, which serve to contradict, in many ways, the popularly held view that 'civil society' did not exist under Communism. First, and in terms of the Gypsy involvement,

---

[53] S. Nikolov, "The Emerging Nonprofit Sector in Bulgaria: Its Historical Dimensions." In K. McCarthy, V. Hodgkinson and R. Sumariwalla (eds.), *The Nonprofit Sector in the Global Community*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1992. p. 345.

[54] *Ibid*. p. 336.

[55] Interviewee: A (6) 20.10.97.

[56] K. Snavely and Udey Resai, "Bulgaria's Non-Profit Sector: The Search for Form, Purpose, and Legitimacy", *Voluntus*, 6 (1) 1995. pp. 23-33.

there had been a conscious move by the Communist Party to nurture a Gypsy intelligentsia in order "to create loyal supporters and instruments for the dispersal of Communist ideology among Gypsies."[57] This had the effect of forming an intellectual base from which autonomous Gypsy organisation could develop. Second, and more generally, there had been the emergence of quasi-non governmental endowments in Bulgaria based on patterns in the West, especially the USA. These endowments flourished in the 1970s as part of the 1,300 years celebration of Bulgarian statehood. Finally, the 1970s saw the introduction of a reduced five day working week, which freed up time for many individuals. This meant that workers could now pursue other activities. Although for some this consisted of participation in the second economy, for others it allowed scope for organisational activities.[58]

Therefore, the question of the extent to which the Communist legacy is to blame for the weak NGO sector is not quite so straightforward as it might appear at first sight. Various features of the transition, together with the NGO structure itself, were also placing serious restrictions on the effectiveness of NGOs since 1989. In Bulgaria, the situation was even more precarious. As one of the poorest countries in Eastern Europe, with one of the highest inflation rates, largest public debt and one of the lowest rates of foreign direct investment, Bulgaria suffered from particularly high levels of uneven unemployment. Excessive demands had been placed on a withering welfare state, and the NGO sector as yet did not have the capacity to deliver social services on any scale. As a result of this and in particular in response to the crisis of 1996/97, a high proportion of Western funding in Bulgaria was directed into the area of humanitarian aid. The Open Society Fund and its network of Open Society clubs formed a backbone to the campaign

---

[57] Marushiakova and Popov, *The Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria - Policy and Community Development*, Sofia (forthcoming).
[58] Nikolov, *op. cit.*

for humanitarian assistance with the injection of US$1,225,000 in 1997 and US$10 million for 1998. This provided school feeding programmes, medical supplies, 'structural components linking relief with development' and micro-credits.[59] Despite such financial investment, its emphasis on emergency aid meant that such efforts represented temporary and therefore only superficial remedies.

My fieldwork, which covered a selection of Gypsy and Gadjo-NGOs across Bulgaria revealed that the various problems that had emerged corresponded with those experienced elsewhere in Eastern Europe.[60] It was evident that the problems they faced were those that underpinned the NGO sector in general. First, Bulgarian NGOs were often accused of under representing the communities they claimed to be working with. A freelance journalist working in Sliven, and a long time supporter of Gypsy interests, was very cynical about the 'new power of projects', as she called it, where 'project' had become the new 'buzz word' in the Gypsy NGO sector. This project-bound approach was mainly a symptom of the NGO structure of funding. It led to the situation whereby the project all too easily became the prime concern, overriding direct concerns with the Gypsy communities themselves.

Second, and related to this, were accusations of corruption leading to distrust. NGO leaders and their obvious display of wealth were particularly vulnerable to such attacks, which, as discussed in section 9 of Chapter 6, led to attempts at the reconciliation of private gain with the promotion of public welfare. Third, internal conflicts caused by personal/ party politics and limited external funding permeated the Bulgarian NGO sector. On a number of occasions during my fieldwork, I witnessed open resentment between organisations and individuals, to the extent that, at times, it prevented me from

[59] UNDP, *op. cit.*
[60] Davis, *op. cit.*, Anheier and Priller, *op. cit.*, Wunker, *op. cit.*

gaining immediate access to certain foundations. In Sliven, for example, the URU were concerned with directing my research away from rival NGOs and attempted (without success) to select the NGOs with whom I should meet.

A lack of a coherent strategy arose from this where initiatives remained localised and structural links with the government were, on the whole, inadequate. During my fieldwork it was apparent that there was little co-ordination between NGOs, in terms of long, or short term strategies. Those who had succeeded in securing funding for projects were often reluctant to share relevant information. Rather than sharing information, it was generally the case that, unless formal links had been established, little was known about the activities of other NGOs. That this lack of coherent strategy then served to hinder relations with local government was a concern raised at a seminar, as examined in chapter 6.

Finally, and at a more general level, with NGOs being increasingly subsumed into the rhetoric of social exclusion there was a risk that strategies over-emphasised the search for finding ways to include 'excluded' groups into the mainstream, whether it be via schooling, training, or proper housing. At the heart of such strategies lay abstract concepts of 'civil society' and 'democracy', which all too easily resulted in a lack of consideration for the value of existing cultures. For those NGOs that had developed from outside Gypsy communities, their links with Gypsies were often distant and as a result they displayed only a limited awareness of the complexities of Gypsy ethnicity and culture.

5.11 The legal framework in Bulgaria

The practical problems of the transition coupled with the particular difficulties associated with the NGO structure, were further undermined by an ambiguous legal framework.

Two types of law existed in Bulgaria that provided the legal framework for NGO activity, whether intentionally or otherwise.[61] There was the basic law that defined organisational forms and the tax law. The basic law entitled Law on Persons and Family established in 1949 during the very early stages of Communist control, was concerned as much with restrictions as with rights for the individual and the family. In terms of its impact during Communism on the scope for organisation within the 'Third Sector', it served to authorise the creation of 'juridical persons with non-economic purpose', which could be translated to mean associations and foundations. Although, a definition of 'non-economic' was not provided, in Bulgaria it was, and still is, generally understood to stand for all non profit activity outside of the business and industrial sectors. Under Communism, the meaning was more limited and as discussed above allowed only for the existence of state led initiatives in the form of quasi-non governmental endowments. Since 1989, the use of the basic law broadened significantly and now provides the legal foundation for the existence of most NGOs. However, the assumption, as under Communism, remains that as voluntary organisations, NGOs are, by definition, disengaged from business-like ventures.[62] This clearly gave rise to a series of problems: firstly, the question of what factors must be considered to determine the voluntary status of an NGO; and, secondly the question of whether the legal basis is removed if profit-making were taking place.

The tax laws were more specific and helped to define more clearly the scope of the third sector. These include the general laws on Income Tax and Local Taxes and Fees. There is a 30 per cent income tax rate (10 per cent less than the basic corporate tax) for "legal entities without state or municipal participation whose annual profits are Lv 1 million or

---

[61] Snavely and Resai, *op. cit.*
[62] *Ibid.*

less."[63] Generally, tax-deductible contributions are granted to non-labour related income (e.g. crafts, commerce, rent). Public organisations (i.e. non-state), also receive a reduced 20 per cent tax rate on business earnings, as opposed to 40 per cent. Up to 20 per cent of such income donated to 'institutions of an ideal purpose' is taken from income tax. But what constituted an 'ideal purpose' was legally vague and its interpretation has changed over time. The Law for Local Taxes and Fees undermines philanthropy potential in that it restricts individual donations of property with a 60 per cent local fee. This restriction on donating contrasts sharply with a more focused move taken in 1990 by the Council of Ministers to encourage the development of the NGO sector. They issued a decree that exempted foundations from certain taxes including import tax. This led to a series of much publicised scandals whereby, under the guise of a foundation status, a number of individuals imported cigarettes and alcohol to resell. By 1992 this decree had been withdrawn, but scepticism had set in.[64]

In its vagueness, Bulgarian law proved adaptable to the post 1989 situation, in that certain types of professional or cultural organisations were able to exist legally. However, this vagueness was also counterproductive and risked inhibiting the growth of a valid, working NGO sector. Indeed, the lack of any legal requirement for a NGO to register with a government authority led to the situation whereby many of the smaller non profits had only a semi-legal status. Any group of six individuals could register and start a NGO. In the case of some of the NGOs I met, this flexibility in law allowed for accusations to be made about rivals, who claimed that they were not legal and therefore were invalid. To obtain a formal legal status NGOs had to register with the courts, but court records did not supply a separate accounting of NGOs. This, together with the high

---

[63] UNDP, *op. cit.*

[64] *Ibid.*; Snavely and Resai, *op. cit.*

turnover of NGOs within the third sector, made it extremely difficult to assess exactly how many NGOs there were at any one time.

According to a survey carried out in 1997 by the Union of Bulgarian Foundations and Associations (UBFA) there were approximately 4,600 organisations registered as associations or foundations under the Bulgarian Persons and Family Law. It is believed that only a third of them were in operation, while the remaining two-thirds existed only on paper.[65] A substantial proportion of these NGOs were registered with the UBFA in March of that year, numbering at 1,094.[66] Most of the organisations consisted of foundations, including both grant making and operating bodies. 13.5 per cent of the total number had the promotion of Bulgarian culture as their main activity, often with heavy overtones of patriotism and an emphasis on (Orthodox) Christian values.[67] This contrasted sharply with only two NGOs which were registered as promoting Turkish or Muslim interests. Other types of NGOs registered included business and professional associations, together with clubs, societies and unions. The kinds of issues covered ranged from environmental protection, human rights, economic reform, culture and education to specific groups such as women, children at risk, and minorities. The total number of Gypsy NGOs registered with the UBFA in 1997 was 30 (2.7 per cent). However, this was not a true depiction of the number of Gypsy NGOs operating within this sector. Many of the NGOs that I had met had chosen not to register with the UBFA, preferring to keep their autonomy. In terms of the religious content there were also many more NGOs in operation that represented Muslim as well as Christian interests.

---

[65] UNDP, *op. cit.*

[66] UBFA, O. Lipovski (ed.), *Directory of Non-governmental Organisations in Bulgaria*, UBFA , Sofia, 1997.

[67] This concentration in cultural and education issues was also evident in the 1993 UBFA directory.

The existence of a few large NGOs gave rise to a series of inequalities in terms of finance and organisational capacities. A huge gap existed between a few 'peak' NGOs and the general bulk of smaller foundations. These larger NGOs, with the exception of Open Society (Soros), all had their roots in the Communist period. This served to fuel early scepticism about the role and function of NGOs in Bulgaria. For example, the Kiril and Methodius Foundation, the second largest NGO in Bulgaria, was the reformed Ludmilla Zhivkova Foundation, established by the Communist Party in 1981. The role of this NGO and others like it was to sponsor "credible and well-developed educational and cultural programmes."[68] However, accusations of corruption and greed were even more common and scarred the public face of these more prominent NGOs.

Coupled with this organisational inequality was that of regional inequality. Most of the NGOs were concentrated in the capital, although there has been a gradual outward spread in recent years. Nevertheless, whole geographic areas, such as North-West Bulgaria, still remain beyond the reach of most Western donors.[69] In the light of such inequalities which fuelled existing scepticism, NGOs increasingly looked towards the international scene for support and recognition. For many, the international arena offered more scope for initiative and creativity. The next section deals with the interaction of national and international NGOs working with Gypsies in the search for a way into the framework of human and minority rights.

5.12 Gypsy NGOs on the international scene.

The spread of NGOs from the national to the international scene had huge implications for their own perceived roles and for the setting of agendas in international relations. The elevation of NGOs onto the international level also opened up new avenues for certain

[68] Snavely and Resai, *op. cit.*
[69] UNDP, *op. cit.*

groups that otherwise remain divided by national boundaries. Gypsies are a good example of a group who maximised this new NGO dimension for the development of their own transnational agendas.[70] The existing human and minority frameworks has largely been the way in for many leading Gypsy activists seeking official recognition at the international level.

It is important to examine how far international norms served to set outer limits for NGO activity and to question how much input there actually was at this level from minority groups and in particular Gypsies themselves. The way in which Gypsy rights were 'fitted' into an existing human rights framework, and the main assumptions that continued to underpin human rights are explored in order to understand why such a framework did not always work in the interests of Gypsies and indeed minority groups in general.

As the largest ethnic minority of Europe, Gypsies on the international scene are first and foremost seeking official recognition of their ethnic identity a part of which entails establishing safeguards and minority rights guarantees. What is crucial here is that a more precise concept is developed of those national minorities that are dispersed across states and to assess the possible implications for Gypsies. Categorising Gypsies as 'stateless' is self-defeating for it restricts them from certain rights, yet fixing them territorially removes their capacity to maintain a transnational identity. One suggested point of departure, as proposed by the Council of Europe, was the concept of 'non-territorial languages', but this failed to tackle issues of culture and identity.

Gheorghe, a leading Romanian Gypsy activist and academic, taking this view argues that faced with scarce resources and with a need for a new resource (i.e. collective rights as a

---

[70] Jean-Pierre Liégeois and Nicolae Gheorghe, *Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority*, Minority Rights Group International Report, 4, 1995.

distinct minority), Gypsies need to identify themselves in collective terms, to crystallise their ethnic identity and to 'play with' their multiple identities in relation to current symbols at national or transnational levels.[71] As discussed in section 8 of Chapter 4, these identities, he argues, can include 'indigenous people', 'ethnic minorities', 'national minorities' or a 'transnational minority'. For the development of a coherent Roma ideology and ethnicity, however, he stresses that Gypsies need to overcome internal disputes. There are problems with each of these identities, which is why Acton, in his Inaugural Lecture, supported this notion of 'playing with' multiple identities rather than resting with just one,

> *When one demands status as a national minority, one implicitly concedes and recognises the rights of the national majority to determine that status. When one demands full citizenship, one implicitly concedes the right of the state to define and exclude non-citizens. When one demands international minority status, one concedes the right of governments to get together and strike bargains about others' human rights without consulting them. In short, all of these 'citizenship' and 'minority rights' approaches function to shore up the legitimacy of ethnic majoritarianism and the nation-state.*[72]

Or, put another way, whether a minority group is defined in terms of 'nationalities', 'peoples', 'minorities', or 'indigenous populations' the end result is essentially the same that "in order to obtain recognition of the claim to cultural identity [...] the claimant must accept the terms of the dialogue."[73] The role of Gypsy organisations in this process of identity formation is crucial, but not the sum total of available options. This is particularly evident in light of their limited input, actually and potentially, into decision making at the international level. International Gypsy NGOs, such as the International Romani Union (IRU), Roma Centre for Social Intervention and Studies, The Federation

---

[71] Nicolae Gheorghe, "Roma - Gypsy Ethnicity in Eastern Europe", *Social Research*, 58 (4), Winter 1991; N. Gheorghe, "The Social construction of Romani Identity." In T. Acton (ed.), *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity*, University of Hertfordshire Press, Hatfield, 1997.

[72] Thomas Acton, "Authenticity, Expertise, Scholarship and Politics: Conflicting Goals in Romani Studies", *Inaugural Lecture Series*, The University of Greenwich, June 1998. p. 11.

[73] Ian Brownlie, "The Rights of Peoples in Modern International Law." In J. Crawford (ed.), *The Rights of Peoples*, Clarendon Paperbacks, Oxford, 1992. pp. 5-6.

of the Romanian Roma, and Romani Criss (members of the IRU and the Standing Conference for Co-operation and Co-ordination of Roma Associations in Europe) have had a variety of roles including consultation/advisory positions and pressure groups. For example, the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), based in Hungary, is an international NGO aimed specifically at monitoring human right abuses of Gypsies across Europe and co-operates with NGOs at national and local levels. The Federation of the Romanian Roma and Romani Criss are also active in this field. They have openly condemned recent attacks on Gypsy homes and families in Romania and criticised authorities for implicitly encouraging such acts of violence.[74] It is the IRU, however, that is most often cited as the success story for Gypsy NGOs trying to gain recognition on the international scene.

5.13 The International Roma Union (IRU)

In 1979, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations formally recognised the IRU as a non-governmental organisation with consultative status. The ideological and practical implications of this move have rarely been critically analysed, thereby allowing the UN to boast of its progress as regards the recognition of Gypsies on the world stage. Symbolically, for the IRU their elevation in status was a positive move as they were now in a better position to represent Gypsy interests on an international level. Furthermore, they now had access to meetings of the sub-commission. The IRU have even been able to transcend their symbolic role on occasions with the issuing of public declarations. In September 1991, for example, they raised the issue that Gypsy rights within a European dimension must fall into wider issues of national minorities.[75] Gypsy communities, they argued, must be recognised as distinct ethnic entities and political subjects in each nation-state, and that they should be treated equally alongside other minorities. This has

[74] Liégeois and Gheorghe, *op. cit.*

[75] C. Auzias, "Les Roms et le Processus d'Helsinki", in *Les Familles Roms d'Europe de l'Est*, Alize production, 1992.

contributed to the gradual dismantling of some of the prejudices against Gypsies at the governmental level, who, seeing that Gypsies have no homeland, have been reluctant to concede that Gypsies constitute national minorities. The IRU in this respect was part of a more general movement towards articulating new identities for Gypsies.

The IRU have also been instrumental in the development of numerous Gypsy projects and initiatives across Europe. These have ranged from propositions to send IRU members to the countries of former Yugoslavia with a view to participating in the peace process and verifying that international standards of human rights, specifically for Gypsies, were being met, to actual collaboration with Helsinki Watch in gathering information on rates of increasing violence against Gypsies. From this the IRU has been in a more informed and credible position to propose ideas, such as the adoption of more rigorous laws to combat racial violence and the increased intervention of an Ombudsman to deal with Gypsy complaints made against government procedures.[76] However, due to the restraints of the UN, the extent to which the IRU has been able to implement their proposals is negligible.

The IRU have also been crucial to the establishment of Romani Summer Schools, which partly funded by UNESCO, have been running annually since 1989.[77] They generally consist of courses on Romani language, history and culture with different foci, such as journalism, development of a Roma Encyclopaedia and Romani linguistics. Such ventures as these have led to huge claims being made about the potential for Roma solidarity, such as those made by Courthiade, the organiser of the 1993 Summer School, who writes:

---

[76] Auzias, *op. cit.*

[77] Belgrade (1989), Vienna (1990), Helsinki (1991), Rome (1992), Sangonis (1993 and 1994). Marcel Courthiade "The Romani Summer School: Already a Tradition." In J. P.. Liégeois (ed.) *Interface 16*, Université René Descartes, Paris, November, 1994.

> *We believe that participants came away with a strengthened awareness of Romani dignity, conceptually better armed in the fields of politics, law and administration [....] better prepared to share their knowledge with their own people, particularly in the [aforementioned] fields but also in terms of increased solidarity.*[78]

Indeed, there have been positive repercussions where a lucky few from the 1993 session were able to participate in various international political and diplomatic activities, such as the Seville Congress supported by the EU (May 1994), the Hearing at the Council of Europe (July), and the CSCE seminar on the Roma in Warsaw (September).[79] However, the extent to which summer schools are open to all Gypsies is debatable and, therefore, we have to question the extent to which these courses are fairly represented.

Gypsy NGOs on the international scene are leading the way in other areas too. Some NGOs are attempting to nurture an autonomous mode of communication, for example, with the publication of Gypsy journals and newsletters.[80] *Interface,* published by the Gypsy Research Centre with the assistance of the Commission of the European Communities, and the Task-Force Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth, is a good example of an information newsletter that is distributed throughout countries in Eastern and Western Europe. This newsletter enables exchange and allows for networking in the development of Gypsy projects and research. Projects include raising awareness among teachers of Gypsies and assessing teaching material in this area coupled with training mediators and setting up a network for inter-school experience exchange.

At the international as well as at the local and national levels, the role of the 'mediator' is seen as vital. The project "Profile and Function of the Gypsy Mediator", proposed by

---

[78] Courthiade, *op. cit.* p. 3

[79] M. Courthiade, "Training for Publication." In Liégeois (ed.) *Interface 16, op. cit.*, 1994.

[80] Jean-Pierre Liégeois, *Roma, Gypsies, Travellers*, Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1994.

Association Romano Lil, aimed at all Member-States, puts into practice the objective of training and employing Gypsy mediators as set out in the Resolution adopted by the Ministers of Education in 1989. It stresses the need to provide the different partners involved (administrative bodies and Gypsy NGOs) with the working tools and guidance they require, based on a working dialogue between the different working groups. This ideal of the Gypsy mediator is expressed in the actions and wishes of Fatima Hartmann, a Gypsy teacher in Germany, who writes,

> *I try to serve as a mediator between the two cultures, for example knowing pupils' problems, how teachers react, the children's social situation, the reasons behind irregular attendance, talking to parents to try to create links between Romani traditions and the demands of Gadjo society, so that one day the two cultures may reach a degree of mutual understanding, acceptance, respect from the majority for the minority and vice versa without having to renounce its own identity.*[81]

The human rights approach is often seen as the most effective framework within which to bring together cultures without renouncing either, and was the strategy most commonly adopted by Gypsy NGOs in Bulgaria at all their levels of operation. However, the good work as described above is not so much a product of the human rights framework, but of the way in which it has been creatively used by those working within it. Ultimately, problems associated with 'negative equality' continue to hold back the pursuit of Gypsy rights in that passive measures tend to outweigh proactive ones, thus diffusing the impetus for implementing specific texts on Gypsies. This can have various implications for Gypsies especially those who still rely on their travelling tradition both economically and culturally. As discussed in section 8 of Chapter 4, the grounding of Gypsy rights alongside more general ones does not in itself guarantee the cultural survival of Gypsy communities and it is this context in which Gypsy NGOs inevitably find themselves whether at the international, national or local level.

---

[81] Fatima Hartmann, "Information File: Germany - Roma participation in school provision." In Liégeois (ed.) *Interface 16, op. cit.* p. 17.

At the formal level, the development of Gypsy NGOs both nationally and internationally has run parallel to the human rights framework rather than penetrating it in that the relationship between multilateral bodies and Gypsy NGOs has so far been largely one directional and characterised by the imposed adaptation on the part of the Gypsy to multilateral norms. However, as discussed above in section 12, at the informal level the picture is slightly different. The idea of 'playing with' identities suggests that the creative use of existing frameworks should be the focus of action in order to avoid the situation whereby in colluding with state and inter-state structures Gypsy NGOs have to sacrifice aspects of their cultural distinctiveness; the very essence of their existence that they are aspiring to protect.

5.14 Conclusion

This chapter has revealed the complexity of the debates that surround the NGO sector, both generally and in relation to the specific contexts of Eastern Europe and Bulgaria. Negative aspects of NGO ineffectiveness, crises in legitimacy, the reproduction of inequality, the ambiguity and vagueness of the concepts, and their potential for manipulation work alongside and in conjunction with more positive aspects of contributing to civil society, representing potential alternatives to the state, having scope for filling in gaps left by inadequate state welfare, and having a higher degree of responsiveness to local communities with possibilities for their direct involvement. Underpinning these complexities is the belief on the part of dominant society that the NGO sector offers a means of drawing together a whole set of disparate and desperate groups, who are seen as falling outside of society, whether it be the poor, the uneducated, or in this case specifically Gypsies.

Strategies of inclusion as a defining feature of NGO activity rest on an articulation of excluded groups, and so we have to ask what the criteria are that determine which groups are targeted. The NGO approach and its role at the ground level is taken as an appropriate means of seeking out 'the needy' and for enabling active participation, community development and the empowerment of these 'excluded' groups. This raises a whole set of issues about the use and promotion of philanthropy and voluntarism as a complement, if not alternative to the state for meeting social needs. First, the rhetoric of social exclusion allows for governments to rely on the NGO sector for 'filling the gap' left by welfare withdrawal. Second, the value attributed to NGOs and their impact on community development is evident in the popular use of NGOs as an indicator of democracy and the existence of civil society. But, we have to ask: how far do NGOs really achieve active participation, and is this an adequate alternative to state structures, or further still a suitable indication of democracy?

Third, the emphasis on NGOs and inclusion strategies, while providing important avenues for some bottom-up activity, do so at the expense of more long term and systemic anti-poverty strategies. In many cases, mismanagement and lack of coherent methods, coupled with deflecting attention away from the state, means that NGOs can serve to disadvantage rather than empower those groups they claim to be representing. As developed in the next three chapters, the contradictions of 'inclusion' can be seen to be embodied in the conflict between the liberal ideal of the NGO sector and its lived reality. Gypsy NGOs at the national and local level are increasingly finding new ways of 'playing with' Western concepts of 'integration' and 'civil society', revealed most lucidly in the case of Gypsy NGOs in Bulgaria.

CHAPTER 6

THE MISSING DIMENSION: GYPSY RESPONSES TO THE 'TRANSITION' IN BULGARIA

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined some of the difficulties inherent to the NGO sector as a whole. This has opened up to question the effectiveness of NGOs as a tool for integration for Gypsies in Bulgaria. This chapter extends its critique of the NGO sector, to that of social exclusion theory. As discussed in section 10 of Chapter 2, one of the key problems with social exclusion theory is its failure to explain, or account for the possibility of resistance on the part of those groups dismissed as powerless, isolated and excluded. The following discussion draws on a number of strategies adopted by Gypsies in Bulgaria, which rest on aspects of both compliance and resistance, illustrating that far from 'backward' or 'isolated', Gypsies within the NGO sector are proving to be important social and political actors during transition.

Gypsies are responding to the transition using a variety of survival strategies, some more public and 'acceptable' than others, such as political organisation, cultural development and more recently participation in NGO sector. The previous chapter discussed the premise on which the NGO sector works by drawing on the various debates about NGO activity as a means of active participation and social change. This chapter reveals and challenges a series of assumptions about Gypsies and the NGO sector. Namely that: the group in question forms a homogenous block; secondly, that they all live a life excluded from the mainstream; and thirdly, that integration as defined by Gadjos is their wanted outcome. In fact, Gypsies constitute a complex array of different ethnic groups and are inextricably tied with macro society in a complex set of mutual relations whether they be economic, cultural or social. Further still, integration and its underlying principle of disappearance, is not necessarily what they want. Therefore, the extent to which NGOs represent genuine participation is still open to question.

On a more informal level, lesser known survival strategies on the part of Gypsies have been in existence for much longer and have had no such recognition. This chapter examines the features of both informal and formal Gypsy responses to the transition in order to bring to light, and validate responses all too readily dismissed as evidence of 'inadaptability', and to show that the NGO sector as a strategy of inclusion is not as foolproof as Western institutions would like us to believe. Finally, this chapter in its discussion of Gypsy responses argues that the distinction between informal and formal strategies is largely an artificial one.

6.2 Informal Gypsy responses to the 'transition': Survival strategies

During the transition Gypsies have faced more an intensification of existing problems, rather than the emergence of entirely new ones. At one level, Gypsies have been relying on traditional occupations in their adaptation to the changing situation. The preservation and functioning of a given group and the flexibility of their traditional occupations partly determine the successful use of such occupations as survival strategies. For example, metal working for the *Burgudzii* (gimlet-makers) who form part of the large 'Jerlii' community (a well defined and preserved group) has proved to be more adaptable during the transition period than such crafts as horse-shoe making, a tradition belonging to the *Nalbanti* (a less well preserved group).[1]

At another level, Gypsies are surviving by supplementing social assistance with 'wheeling and dealing' i.e. informal activities or casual work whether traditional or otherwise. These strategies range from collecting scrap metal and gathering wild berries to trans-border small scale trade and seasonal labour together with support from extended family network. As well as searching out new economic niches, Gypsies have also been surviving by using a variety of 'negative' strategies. These include crime, begging, scavenging, dropping out of school and claiming refugee status abroad. These are

[1] Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Gypsies (Roma) in Bulgaria*, Studien zur Tsganelogi und Folklovistik 18, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 1997. pp. 105-122.

dismissed by wider society as irrational or scheming and as indicative of their 'backward' or 'deviant' nature. [2]

Official and non-official statistics offer one source of information and can give some indication (albeit problematic) of the 'everyday responses' of Gypsies. This can include data on: suicide; migration; crime; begging; drop-out rates; and absenteeism. However, such statistics are either unavailable or not broken down into ethnic groups. Those statistics on Gypsies that do exist such as on migration, crime and absenteeism are based on a mixture of official and non-official sources and are distorted or at best limited. Yet, it is these statistics on which decisions and attitudes are formed. The following statistics on aspects of the Gypsy situation in Bulgaria are taken from a variety of sources. By revealing the difficulties outlined above they give us an indication of the leeway that exists for different interpretations to develop.

6.3 Education

According to the 1946 Bulgarian census, 81 per cent of Gypsies in Bulgaria at that time were illiterate. This timely indication of the 'Gypsy problem' provided the BCP with a specific agenda. It was their intention to turn around such figures in the interest of rapid modernisation and industrial growth. As a result, the BCP made it compulsory for all healthy children from 6-16 years, regardless of ethnicity, to attend formal schooling. Nevertheless, this did not prevent the establishment of a separate schooling system for Gypsies. According to a survey on Gypsies carried out in 1992, one tenth of the respondents claimed to have been educated in a special boarding school during the 1950s.[3] It was hardly surprising therefore that some 30 years after the BCP came to power, Gypsies still had distinctively low literacy rates. In 1978, only 30 per cent of Gypsy children completed primary school and over 50 per cent of Gypsies aged more than 30 years were illiterate.[4]

---

[2] Ilona Tomova, *The Gypsies in the Transition Period*, International Centre for Minority Studies and Inter Cultural Relations, Sofia, 1995.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] These figures were taken from a Communist Party Document dated 1978, quoted in T. Zang, *Destroying Ethnic Identity - The Gypsies of Bulgaria. A Helsinki Watch Report*, New York, June, 1991. p. 30.

Taken together, official and non-official sources confirm the existence of segregated schooling for Gypsies. The National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria estimates that in 1992 Gypsies constituted less than 10 per cent of pupils in mainstream education, yet for segregated schools their numbers were much higher. Gypsies represented 32.1 per cent of pupils in auxiliary schools, 21.6 per cent of pupils in vocational schools and 29 per cent of pupils in schools for behavioural problems.

Table 6.1 The structure of ethnic groups in Bulgaria according to education level completed, 1992 and 1994 (%)

Education	Bulgarians	Bulgarian Turks	Gypsies (1992 Ce	Gypsies (1994 Survey)[5]
Higher/College	20.2	2.0	0.9	0.3
Secondary/ Special	54.0	24.6	7.8	8.5
Elementary	22.6	55.0	46.2	40
Primary	3.0	16.0	36.7	36
Illiterate	0.2	2.3	8.5	16

Source: Census (1992), Tomova (1995)

Data that rely entirely on registration figures are easily undermined when the factor of absenteeism or truancy is taken into consideration. According to a leading Gypsy linguist and NGO leader, of 800,000 Bulgarian Gypsies in 1992/93 only 120,000 were registered pupils, i.e. 15 per cent.[6] The results of the 1992 Bulgarian census revealed that all those pupils who were registered with schools did not attend. This, coupled with Tomova's 1992 survey, in which truancy rates were recorded as high as 70 per cent in some places, partly explains the continued high rate of illiteracy for Gypsies in Bulgaria.[7]

[5] This survey (n = 1 844) co-ordinated by the International Center for Minority and Intercultural Studies forms the basis to Tomova's research on Gypsies in Bulgaria during the transition, *op. cit.*

[6] Hristo Kyuchukov, *Romany Children and Their Preparation for Literacy: A Case Study,* Tilburg University Press, Tilburg, 1995.

[7] Although she acknowledges that there is much variation between regions, no explanation is offered or factors considered (such as the prevalence of Gypsy teachers or lower poverty rates). The Foundation 'Women For Mercy - Roma', a foundation led by two Gypsy women, was keen to search for reasons behind high truancy rates (Interview: A (9) 22.10.97). It had recently commissioned a team of psychologists to conduct a survey who concluded that the economic crisis was the main reason why children were currently not attending school. 80 per cent of the Gypsies in their survey gave the economic crisis as the reason for their truancy. The number of respondents and how they were selected, together with its exact methodology, were not revealed. Therefore, we are left to wonder how representative this survey was, how much scope the respondents had in explaining their

The high drop-out rate among Gypsies has also been a cause for concern and has attracted much interest among NGOs working with Gypsies. According to the National Statistical Institute for Bulgaria (1992), since 1989 26-33,000 children have dropped out of school every year (not including those who do not even register in the first place). That this drop out rate increases as they progress through the school system is evident in Tables 6.1 and 6.2. In mainstream schools Gypsies constitute: 14.7 per cent in 1-3 class, 9.2 per cent in 4-8 class and 0.9 per cent in 8 class upwards, which supports the idea that it is mainly Gypsies rather than Bulgarians who are dropping out. In 1992 it was estimated by the national census, together with surveys indicated by the International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR), that: first, 83 per cent of Gypsies in Bulgaria had completed schooling only up to the elementary or primary school level; and second, that the average school starting and leaving ages for Gypsies were considerably narrower than the national average attendance rate, standing at 8-9 years old and 13-14 years old respectively.[8]

Table 6.2 The percentage of Gypsies in education according to education level completed, 1978-1994 (%)

	% of Gypsies in *mahalas* and villages with:			
	primary education	**elementary education**	**secondary education**	**higher education**
1978-80*	31.4	41	4.1	0.6
1994*	36	40	8.5	0.3

* Gypsy illiteracy rate: 11.1 % and 16 % respectively
Source: NSI, 1992 and Tomova, 1995

Tomova's survey gives us only some indication as to the possible motives behind these truancy and drop-out patterns, where nearly half of the respondents (48 per cent) interviewed said they did not have children of school age, although for more than half of these this was not the case. About 30 per cent of the respondents said that their children

situation, and whether or not the respondents just gave the answers that they thought the interviewers wanted to hear.

[8] These surveys were carried out in 1992, 1993, 1994, 1997.

should go to school but did not and 24 per cent said their children attended regularly.[9] Although the motives remained unclear, what is certain is that of the respondents, less than half attended school (978 out of 2,047 - 47.7 per cent). Likewise, the United Roma Union (URU) claimed that more than 50 per cent of Gypsies did not attend school.[10]

On a local level, the problems of truancy and dropping out were equally evident. The number of students officially registered at the school in Faculteta, Sofia for the academic year 1996-97 was 1,200 (all of which were Gypsies). However, according to the Romani Bah Foundation, whose office is situated in Faculteta, this constituted only half of the children of school age who lived there. Furthermore, of these 1,200 children only half attended regularly. Only 51 pupils had finished primary school and of them only 36 had continued onto secondary school.[11] Likewise, the Mayor of Nadejda, a large Gypsy quarter in Sliven, said that of the 980 Gypsy children of school age in this quarter, only 640 attended school, i.e. 65 per cent. The reasons he gave were vague and were based on the supposition that parents and children in carrying out seasonal work were not at home long enough to attend school.[12]

In contrast, the Romani Bah Foundation identified in their report specific problems and factors that needed consideration. The report noted that the 10 year curriculum is vocationally based and consists of 2 years at pre-school, 6 years at primary and 2 years vocational training, which involves interior decoration for boys and sewing/dress design for girls. The school has 69 teachers and staff turnover is extremely high. During the 1994/5 academic year 20 per cent of the staff left. Only four of the teachers were Gypsies and it was these classes that had the highest attendance. The vice-director of this school, according to this report, claimed that less than 10 per cent of the parents attended the parent-teacher meetings.[13]

---

[9] The survey was not based on open-ended questions but the interviewees were given a selection of responses to choose from - there was no scope for them to give reasons for their children not attending school.

[10] Interview: A (6) 20.10.97.

[11] Romani Bah Foundation *"Report"*, September 1997.

[12] Interview: 23.10.97.

[13] Romani Bah Foundation, *op. cit.*

In terms of higher education, the figures were even more stark. However, two separate NGOs proudly claimed that between 100 and 150 Gypsies had graduated from secondary and higher education in Sliven alone.[14] Although such numbers were seen as a cause for celebration, we were left to guess at the time scale and, perhaps most importantly, at what had happened to them since. Perhaps most significantly, however, was the sense of pride that certain Gypsy leaders expressed when talking about Gypsy 'successes' in terms of achievement within the education system. It was generally the case that those Gypsy leaders who were most explicit in drawing attention to the existence of 'successful' Gypsies, were former leaders from the Soviet period and were of the opinion that the state had helped to preserve Romani culture. As with the two NGOs above, however, there was evidence of anti-BSP leaders being equally keen to elevate the status of 'successful' Gypsies.

BSP Gypsy leaders (although not always officially defined as such) would correspond claims about the existence of Gypsy doctors, lawyers and scientists, with reports of increasing numbers of Gypsy students entering higher education. This promotion of academic and professional skills as authentic to Gypsy values reflected a continuation of a belief in 'Soviet' ideals.[15] This subtle championing of socialism emphasised free education, and other benefits that had characterised the former regime and which, they argued, had helped integrate Gypsies and nurture a Gypsy intelligentsia.[16] However, this clashed with stances taken by other key Gypsy leaders who, in contrast, saw the state as having destroyed Romani culture, where enforced sedentarisation and policies of assimilation had undermined vital elements of Gypsy survival.

---

[14] Interviews: A (6) 20.10.97 and A (5) 20.10.97. Both these NGOs expressed allegiance with the UDF, i.e. set themselves up in opposition to the former Soviet regime.

[15] For example, a Gypsy doctor who was also the Head of the Public Council (a body set up by the local Municipality aimed at representing Gypsies and co-ordinating Gypsy NGOs in the area) and had previously been an MP for the BCP during the Soviet era, was keen to report of 'successful' Gypsies in Bulgaria, and to enquire of how well Gypsies were doing in the UK. Interview: 23.10.97.

[16] Indeed, for many Gypsies, both within and without the NGO sector, the Soviet past represents an era of nostalgia, where Gypsies remember having equal access to a whole series of benefits, such as free education, employment and subsidised housing, that have now been taken away.

This debate reveals a number of interesting problems: The search for 'authenticity' on the part of Soviet style Gypsy leaders rested on a wish to become civilised, or to be accepted as such. However in the post-1989 context, this becomes complicated. 'Personal success' is still considered by Gypsy leaders and indeed wider society in terms of 'Soviet' values, e.g. level of integration in education, number of Gypsy doctors and so forth, which is a past that people in general are now, at best, ambivalent about. On the other hand, the stance taken by 'new' Gypsy leaders, i.e. those who are leaning towards, or who actively subscribe to the UDF, while critical of Soviet policy towards Gypsies, still rests on a search for authenticity. They do not deny the importance of Gypsies entering into Bulgarian public life, whether it be through university or the attainment of professional qualifications, but their emphasis is on nurturing an 'authentic' Gypsy culture that extends back beyond the Soviet era to a time immemorial.[17] Although politically divided, Gypsy leaders seem united by their implicit reliance on searching for the 'authentic' whether it be in terms of relaying facts about the high number of Gypsy graduates, or by stressing the innate value of Gypsy culture.[18] Confronted with this apparent paradox, whereby Soviet values are at once discredited, yet valued, it is clear that the search for authenticity serves to replicate ideological distinctions between Gypsies and non-Gypsies.

6.4 Unemployment

Most political and NGO leaders agree that the lack of education, coupled with the removal of traditional survival strategies, are the prime causes for the vast rise in unemployment rates for Gypsies. Although unemployment statistics are more readily available, their degree of reliability is highly questionable both at the national and local levels. Due to the problem of the lack of reliable data, problems of measurement and in particular ambiguity over how to distinguish clearly between employment and unemployment, it is difficult to assess the exact level of Gypsy unemployment in Bulgaria as indeed across Eastern Europe. Table 6.3 in its reliance on a variety of non-

[17] See Alaina Lemon's discussion on the negotiation of representation for Gypsies in Moscow Teatr Romen. Alaina Lemon, "Hot Blood and Black Pearls: Socialism, Society, and Authenticity at the Moscow Teatr Romen", *Theatre Journal*, 48, 1996. pp. 479-494.

[18] However, as pointed out by Lemon, *ibid.*, it is important to note that not all Gypsies are concerned with notions of authenticity, and that they do not always fundamentally differentiate between themselves and non-Gypsies.

official sources illustrates the inadequacy of official data on Gypsy unemployment during the transition.

Table 6.3 Unemployment of Gypsies in four East European countries during the transition (%)

Country	Unemployment rate (%)
Macedonia (2)	> 80*
Bulgaria (3)	76**
Hungary (2)	65***
Romania(1)[19]	22.3 (men) 70.8 (women)

(1) 1993, (2) 1994, (3) 1995

**According to Bakir Arif, President of the Progressive Democratic Party of the Roma (PDPR).*[20]

***Overall per cent of unemployed Roma of working age taken from a nation-wide survey.*[21]

****Male Gypsies previously employed for 10 yrs who lost their jobs.*[22]

On a more local level, the problem of accuracy increases. Although not based upon reliable sources, the perceptions expressed about local unemployment by NGO leaders were fairly consistent: One NGO put the unemployment rate for Gypsies at 80 per cent compared to the average of 13-14 per cent for the rest of Bulgaria, others at 90 per cent, and one even reported levels as high as 98-100 per cent in some areas.[23] According to one NGO, in Faculteta, of which the total working age is c10,000 only 500 had jobs with regular contracts, i.e. 95 per cent of those of working age did not have regular employment.[24]

The semi-legal economy is very active in Bulgaria where for many families, both Gypsy and Gadjo, incomes are generated via informal means. This makes it very difficult to calculate exactly where to draw the line between employment and unemployment and

[19] The Centre of Economic Information and Documentation , Bucharest 1993, n = 5,968.

[20] Interview conducted by Zolton Barony 13.3.94 in, "The Roma in Macedonia: Ethnic Politics and the Marginal Condition in a Balkan state", *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 18 (3), 3 July, 1995. p. 519.

[21] Tomova, *op. cit.* p. 71.

[22] Kertesi Havas and Kemeny, "The Statistics of Deprivation: The Roma in Hungary", *Hungarian Quarterly*, 36, Summer, 1995. p. 71.

[23] Interviews: B (6) 20.10.97; A (1) 4.3.97; A (6) 20.10.97; A (7) 21.10.97.

[24] Interview: B (2) 17.9.97. Romani Bah Foundation, *op. cit.*

opens up further doubts about the accuracy of unemployment figures. Finding statistics that provide information on alternative sources of income, such as begging or scavenging, is also very difficult.

6.5 Crime

Whereas statistics on unemployment for different ethnic groups may be scarce, for crime figures the reverse is true. At one level, the identification of an ethnic element to crime represents a means for institutions to target and discriminate against certain minority groups. Although this is clearly unjust, it would also be misleading to dismiss the ethnic element altogether. Given that the reasons for crime are many and complex, it is important to explore how the factor of ethnicity interacts with other factors, such as of class and gender. For example, the 'villain' in the case of a 'robbery' may need a concise fear of the victim in order to carry out the crime 'guilt-free', hence, the Gypsy stealing from a Gadjo is more acceptable than stealing from a fellow Gypsy.[25] Of course, this is just one possible explanation, but it shows that any approach to crime that is governed by a 'political agenda', whether it be to condemn or defend Gypsies, is at best limited in its scope.

Nonetheless, the ethnic element is just one of many factors and not necessarily the guiding one in the carrying out of crime. For example, Daroczi, a Gypsy ethnographer at the Hungarian institute of Culture makes a point relevant to the general problem of so-called 'Gypsy crime' across Eastern Europe. She argues that although crime among Gypsies is high it is no higher than among non-Gypsies with similar levels of education and standards of living.[26] For her the factor of class presides over that of ethnicity. Likewise, Lemon argues that the crime rate among poor Gypsies in Eastern Europe is no higher than for poor non-Gypsies, ethnicity therefore is not taken as the determining factor.[27]

---

[25] A comparable example would be the media hype of 'black muggers', which peaked in London in the 1980s.

[26] Quoted in Paul Hockenos, *Free to Hate: The Rise of the Far Right in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, Routledge, London, 1993.

[27] Alaina Lemon, "No Land, No Contracts for Romani Workers", *Transition*, 2 (13), 28 June, 1996. p. 29.

In Bulgaria in August 1992, the then Director of the National Police and later Minister of the Interior presented a report to the Regional Directors of Internal Affairs in which he claimed that for those crimes where the police have established the identity of the criminal, 37.5 per cent were Gypsies. According to this report Gypsies in Bulgaria make up 34.7 per cent of murderers, 31.9 per cent of rapists and 42.2 per cent of burglars. These figures were widely quoted and published by the media.

Since 1993, the annual publications of the Bulgarian National Institute of Statistics "Crime and Sentenced Persons" has published detailed accounts of all sentenced people by ethnicity and by type of crime. The total number of Gypsies (adult and juvenile) sentenced for crimes in 1993, 1994, 1995 was 4,565. Table 6.4 shows a clear rise in crime committed by Gypsies between 1993-1995, but not to the extent of representing one third of all reported crimes. Indeed, the police now maintain that every fifth perpetrator of crime is a Gypsy rather than the previous claim of one in every three.[28]

Table 6.4 The per centage of Gypsies sentenced for crimes (excluding juvenile convicts), 1993-1995 (%)

Year	in total crime	in crimes against persons	in crimes against property
1993	6.8	3.3	14.6
1994	14.4	8.0	19.4
1995	20.2	11.7	26.2

Source: NSI, 1995.

This contrasts with the figures offered by Panev in his study of the 'crime explosion' in Bulgaria.[29] His overall findings suggest that crime increased more than threefold between 1990-1994. He then argues that the majority of this crime is committed by Gypsies, using theft as an example. In 1994 the number of registered thefts committed by Bulgarians was 287 per 100,000; for Turks it was slightly higher at 406 per 100,000. For Gypsies,

[28] *Trud,* 10 July, 1997.

[29] Baicho Panev, "Vzriv na prestupnosta v Bulgaria" (The Crime Explosion in Bulgaria), *Statistika*, 4, 1995. Figure 3, p. 34.

however, the figure for the same period reached 6,592 per 100,000. This seems to offer conclusive evidence that Gypsies are more likely than both Bulgarians and Turks to commit crime, or at least theft. However, the use of theft as an indicator of overall crime is misleading. A 1997 ERRC report on the state of Gypsies in detention in Bulgaria argues that crimes in which Gypsies are involved tend to be less sophisticated and easier to reveal, investigate and punish compared to crimes typically committed by members of other groups.[30] Therefore, the high numbers of Gypsies committing theft must be explained in the context of other crimes and in terms of the role of policing, whereby officials have a greater tendency to target, arrest and imprison Gypsies than with other ethnic groups.

This range of official and non-official data give some indication, at least, of how Gypsies appear to evade all established norms, such as, by not attending school, and by committing crime. Given the scale of the 'problems' where drop-out, unemployment and crime rates are relatively high for Gypsies, it becomes easy for public figures, whether politicians or high-ranking police officers, to equate the anti-social behaviour of Gypsies with signs of 'inadaptability'. However, conflicting rationalities have to be considered, where for some Gypsies these informal strategies may actually represent pivotal mechanisms for survival. For example, recent innovative strategies, such as open 'wheeling and dealing', serve to complement, and in some cases are informed by traditional forms of survival, such as the use of horse-trading skills in the now more profitable trade of car-dealing. By securing the economic survival of a given community, such 'deviant' survival strategies, contribute to the maintenance of more general Romani traditional values, by promoting a sense of self-worth. In this way, Gypsy communities, which appear to be engaging in anti-social behaviour are indeed securing their own cultural as well as economic survival.

---

[30] European Roma Rights Center (ERRC), *Profession: Prisoner - Roma in Detention in Bulgaria,* Country Reports Series No. 6, December, Budapest, 1997.

Nevertheless, informal strategies are set up in contrast to those that are traditionally seen as formal strategies, such as participation and adaptation. Silverman, in her study on Gypsies in the USA in the late 1980s, shows that the distinction between informal and formal strategies are not so much separate as mutually supportive.[31] On the surface Gypsies may appear to be abandoning their Gypsy heritage in their adoption of formal strategies, yet it is the combination of *appearing* to assimilate and the continued practice of informal strategies that ensures the survival of Gypsies as an ethnic group. Any kind of change has often been misunderstood in Gypsy culture as a sign of assimilation and so potential disappearance. Silverman argues, however, that change represents to Gypsies one of their most significant sources of survival,

> *Innovations in areas of culture such as housing, travel patterns, occupation, and acquiring non-Gypsy languages, signal creative adaptation to situations of perpetual cultural contact.[..].Change occurs not only because it is inevitable, but also because it is the fundamental adaptive and creative strategy survival in non-Gypsy settings.*[32]

The ability of Gypsies to appear assimilated yet remain distinct, manifests itself most clearly in their recent change of strategy of incorporating from below the NGO sector. Rather than 'selling out' on their part, this adaptation represents a new twist in their survival strategy.

6.6 Formal Gypsy responses to the 'transition': The NGO sector

In the light of these shifting dimensions in survival strategies I explore the complex world of Gypsy NGOs in Bulgaria.[33] The move on the part of Gypsies to accept the influence of the NGO sector 'as a bonus rather than as a replacement' can be seen as a pro-active process of 'cultural adaptation'. Acton in his study of Gypsy politics, suggested a possible typology of cultural adaptation: conservatism, where Gypsies minimise their cultural

---

[31] Carol Silverman, "Negotiating "Gypsiness" Strategy in Context", *American Folklore*, 101 (401), 1988.

[32] *Ibid.* p. 268.

[33] As explained in the first chapter, I explore only a certain strand of NGOs excluding those defined as businesses or those which work explicitly as part of any particular church. The focus of this study was on small to medium sized foundations or organisations that dealt with Gypsy issues and which were run either by Gypsies or Gadjos. My decision to focus on the more dynamic and visible NGOs was informed by a desire to unravel some of the criteria that were being applied to 'successful' NGOs. Problems associated with strategies of participation and community development are not necessarily due to the malpractice of a few ill-informed NGOs, but are representative of problems that go much deeper as evident in those NGOs that are judged as 'effective'.

contact; cultural disintegration, where Gypsies become impoverished and their will to resist dominant society is destroyed; cultural adaptation, where Gypsies accept influences, such as nationalist tendencies; and 'passing', where Gypsies conceal their origins and identity and integrate.[34] Using this fourfold framework it is possible to see the participation of Gypsies within the NGO sector as a process of cultural adaptation, where it represents for many a means for seeking a new status within the host society, and securing a new legitimate space within which to politcally manoeuvre.

In Bulgaria since 1989, due to shifting freedoms and constraints, there has been a sharp growth and subsequent decline in Gypsy political and cultural activity at the formal level. In the immediate aftermath of 1989, the spattering of illegal activity that had existed under Communism developed fast into formally organised political activity. The Democratic Union of Roma, *ROMA* in Sofia led by Manush Romanov, a prominent Gypsy leader from the Communist era, was the first major Gypsy political movement of its kind in Bulgaria.[35] Romanov was also a member of the Public Council in the National Question attached to the National Assembly in January 1990 and in an interview he stressed that ROMA was an independent organisation free from any attachment to existing political parties.[36] During its peak in the 1990 elections, *ROMA* represented approximately 50,000 Gypsies across Bulgaria. However, parallel organisations, such as the Socialist Democratic Union of Roma, later dropped the 'socialist' adjective but maintained its commitment to the 'moral progress of the Romanies, in the spirit of love for the Fatherland' coupled with breakaway factions such as "Alternative Movement for the Promotion of Gypsy Cultural and Social Life", soon served to undermine support for *ROMA*.[37]

---

[34] Thomas Acton, *Gypsy Politics and Social Change*, Routledge, London, 1974. p. 35.

[35] According to a report on the founding of this union, Romanov had been one of the many Gypsy leaders persecuted during the Communist regime. Cited by Simon Simonov, "The Gypsies: A Re-Emerging Minority", *Report on Eastern Europe*, 25 May, 1990. p. 14.

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] *Ibid;* Donald Kenrick, "The Gypsies of Bulgaria Before and After the 10th of November", paper presented to *The Gypsy Lore Society Conference*, July 1991.

A disillusionment with politics on the part of Gypsies and society in general gradually set in. The form the interviews took with those Gypsy NGO leaders who had previously been involved in party politics was quite revealing in this sense. The interview was often transformed into either a platform for their political agenda or a session in which they could off-load their disillusionment with politics. Furthermore, their experience in formal politics had obviously had some impact on their use of rhetoric and grandiose statements in raising the issues and concerns of Gypsies in Bulgaria. One Gypsy NGO leader explained how his earlier political aspirations had been thwarted by a combination of internal and external barriers. These consisted of party political divisions between the 'blues' (UDF) and the 'reds' (BSP), unfulfilled promises from the Government ("two presidents have been elected and both promised that we would have an office in Sofia, but we still don't"), and the realisation that their attempts at forming links with the government were naive and misguided ("We thought of only how to work from Sofia and how to influence parliament thereby neglecting problems of common people in the quarters").[38] The constitutional reform of 1991 acted as a final impetus for many Gypsy leaders to withdraw from party politics, where Article 3 paragraph 2 of the Law on Political Parties, adopted by Parliament in April 1990, stipulated that "No Political party can be constituted [...] on a religious or ethnic basis [...]". This was used to deny the registration of the Democratic Roma Union in 1991 in spite of Article 6 paragraph 2 which guarantees that there is to be no "limitations of the rights or privileges based on ethnic belonging."

The decline in the scope of political activity brought about by internal and external factors, together with an injection of Western finance into non-governmental and non-profit initiatives, led to a rapid growth in the NGO sector. With the collapse of welfare and the withdrawal of the once paternal state, coupled with restrictions on formal political activity, 'self-help' was seen by many Gypsy leaders and pro-reformers as the only way

[38] Interview with Peter Kostov (National Association of Roma Organisations and Foundations) B (6) 20.10.97 Other leaders who expressed their disillusionment with persistently broken promises include, Gorgi Golov (URU) A (6) 20.10.97, and Denko Kumanov (Foundation 'Hope') A (8) 22.10.97.

forward.[39] The self-organisation of Gypsies in the NGO sector, therefore, was a response to both the opportunities of the transition and its problems. Past political leaders and a new generation of educated Gypsies were leading the way in many aspects of this self-styled 'Third-Sector'. It was clear that the Gypsies I came into contact with represented only a small strand of their total population in Bulgaria. These educated Gypsies were 'keying into' this NGO growth area and had begun work in numerous areas, such as education, employment, and legal advice. Gypsy-led NGOs, in carving out new methods of survival, were developing alongside and, at times, in competition with other NGOs.

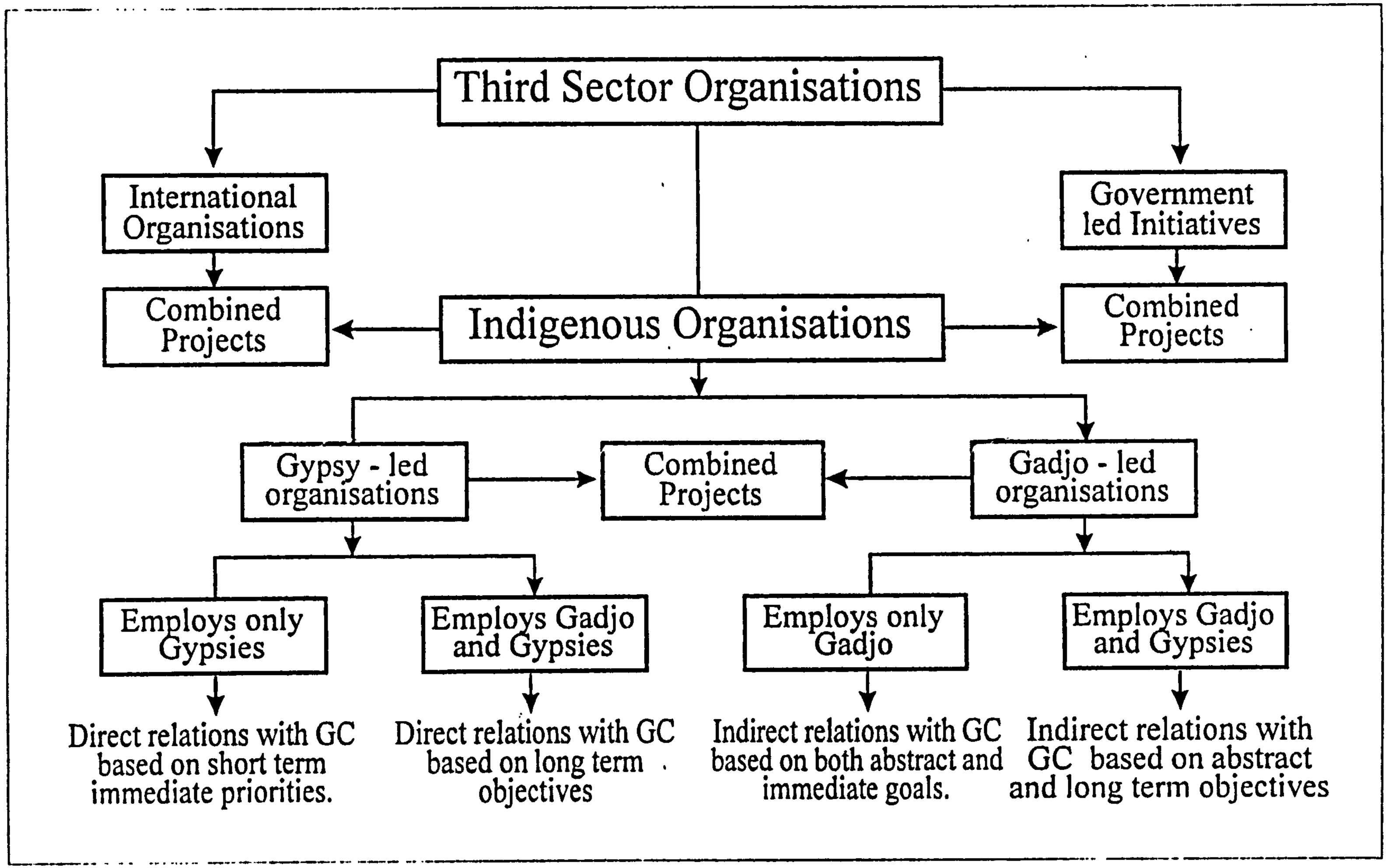
The daily obstacles that Gypsy NGOs faced were vast, from practical problems of electricity cut-outs to obvious reluctance on the part of local authorities to negotiate. However, Gypsy organisations managed firmly to establish themselves as a viable part of the NGO sector. Figure 6.1 shows the position and role of Gypsy organisations within the wider structure of the third sector and draws attention to the different types of NGOs that work with Gypsies. The chart tracks the evolution and spread of NGOs, with Gypsy NGOs forming at the tips of the family tree. The three roots that feed into the third sector, international, indigenous and government led initiatives, all in turn feed into those NGOs working with and/or led by Gypsies. In this way, it is possible to demonstrate that Gypsy NGOs were not some obscure separate entity but were tied into the very structure of the NGO sector. Although the repercussions of this were complex, the fact remained that Gypsy NGOs were just as part of the NGO structure, with its benefits and pitfalls, as any other type of NGO.

NGOs working with and/or led by Gypsies came under a variety of names, including associations, unions, organisations, and foundations. Most of the NGOs called themselves foundations. These tended to be small-scale with short life spans, whose incomes depended entirely on securing funding for short term projects.

---

[39] Andreas Biro, champion of 'helping self-help' through his NGO, The Hungarian Foundation for Self Reliance, was the 1995 Winner of the Alternative Nobel Prize.

Figure 6.1 The position and role of Gypsy organisations within the Third Sector



GC = Gypsy communities

Those NGOs which called themselves organisations were keen to stress that they were 'more' than a foundation in that they had permanent fixtures that extended beyond the locality. One particular Gypsy organisation was very persistent in getting across its message that it was 'better' than other NGOs, in that it had a formal nation-wide membership based on a set of established criteria. Nevertheless, the differences in name did not necessarily translate into corresponding differences in agendas or programmes of action. The main thrust of those NGOs which I interviewed, whether they were foundations or organisations, were of a specific nature. They worked where processes of oppression and discrimination were most evident, i.e. with settled Gypsies and in particular with those living in Gypsy quarters. They did not have formal political aspirations although some did show support for a political party.[40] Likewise, although Orthodox/Muslim/ Evangelical fault lines were apparent between Gypsy organisations, most of the NGO members I had contact with were not formally working in the explicit interests of any one particular religion. Finally, unlike many other NGOs registered with the UBFA, the NGOs I interviewed all had at least either a team of staff, an office, and/or current work.

The motivation common to all the Gypsy NGOs that I interviewed was the integration of Gypsies *as a community* into wider society. Contrary to popular belief, Gypsies in general did wish for some kind of integration, but on terms that respected their cultural identity and ensured their continued survival. The question of cultural survival was central to many of the approaches taken by Gypsy-led NGOs, as opposed to Gadjo-led NGOs which were more concerned with fitting the 'Gypsy question' into the wider agenda of human rights. Whereas some Gypsy leaders recognised the importance of their NGO in offering immediate practical help to their community, others also stressed its role of influencing wider societal and political structures. One Gypsy NGO leader was keen to challenge accepted notions of what the NGO stood for. He wanted his foundation to extend beyond the limited role of providing services to meet immediate needs. His concern was with longterm goals of empowering Gypsies so that they would be informed

[40] Confederation of Roma in Bulgaria - BSP, Roma Foundation 'Hope' - BSP, United Roma Union - UDF.

and so better able to negotiate their own rights and terms of integration. His NGO could only ever be considered successful, he argued, if it was no longer required and ceased to exist.[41] Expressing the same sentiment, another Gypsy NGO leader stated that "I dream of the day when my foundation is useless."[42] Of course, this was not the view expressed by all those working within the sector whose NGOs were often their only source of income and livelihood.

Nevertheless, some expressed frustration at the magnitude of everyday problems that hindered advancement at the wider level. For example, one leader spoke of the overwhelming response on the part of the local communities to the establishment of their organisation. He explained how daily they had people coming into the office seeking help in a whole variety of areas. These ranged from requests for help with funeral arrangements or money, to problems encountered with the police or factory mangers. Seeing such problems as ultimately the responsibility of state institutions, he was keen to reduce the amount of office hours available for such requests.[43]

In spite of differences in the organisation of priorities, there was a general consensus over the need for improving mechanisms for 'self-help'. Strategies of 'bottom-up participation', in whatever forms, were typically adopted by Gadjo and Gypsy NGOs alike in Eastern Europe working with Gypsies. However, the premise for such strategies altered between the different types of NGOs, i.e. between those led by Gadjo and those by Gypsies. For one particular NGO, which had Gadjo only staff, this zeal for 'self-help' rested upon the view that Gypsies, had somehow 'forgotten' how to act for themselves. CEGA (Creating Effective Grass root Alternatives - a Bulgarian non-Gypsy NGO) and Novib (a Dutch grant-making foundation) in their introduction to *Moving Beyond Walls: The Stolipinovo People Taking Charge of Their Community* (1997) claimed that,

[41] Interview: B (2) 17.9.97.
[42] Interview: B (6) 20.10.97.
[43] Interview: A (6) 20.10. 97.

> *The Stolipinovo Self-Help Bureau offered an alternative to inertia and dependency on mere expectations...it rests on two almost forgotten traditions: the self-help inherent in the bonds of the family and kin, and the self-reliance on own resources.*[44]

Mikulas, Szodgayora and Polak made a similar point in their paper for the Council Of Europe, but placed more emphasis on the causes,

> *the biggest mistake done in the past with the Gypsy population was the destruction of their responsibility for their own destiny. Systems of social care, financial subsidies, and insufficient education led to the situation we are facing today...like most poverty groups accustomed to a day-to-day existence, Gypsies tend to be present-time oriented.*[45]

Within this ideological outlook, the adoption of 'community development' through 'bottom-up participation' becomes an absolute necessity in order to overcome the perceived inertia associated with Gypsy communities. However, given the gravity of their analysis whereby Gypsies are seen as trapped by cumulative forces from without and within, even in their own terms the idea that NGOs alone offer the solution becomes increasingly implausible.

6.7 Types of organisation, activity and development

Although a number of important differences existed between the types of NGOs I interviewed, a general pattern emerged in terms of common emphases and approaches. First, they all promoted themselves to me as a working NGO by listing their various successful projects (even if later it was revealed that at present they have no work); second, they all explained to me the most important problems Gypsies faced in Bulgarian society as they saw it; third, they revealed to me some of the problems in terms of organisation (funding and/or politics); and finally, once problems of funding had been acknowledged, they would often appeal to me for any contacts in Britain that I could put them in touch with.

---

[44] Mariana Milosheva (ed.), *Moving Beyond Walls -The Stolipinovo People Taking Charge of Their Community*, CEGA, Sofia, 1997. p. 8.

[45] Quoted in Mark Braham, *The Untouchables*, A Report to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 1992. p. 83. Although apparently sympathetic to the needs of Gypsies, it is important to note here the cultural values that are invoked by this particular view of Gypsies. Present-time orientation is one of the common ways in which outsiders *interpret* the lifestyle of Gypsies, and is not necessarily a true depiction. The cultural values that are then associated with this interpretation, i.e. primitivism and backwardness, serve to disqualify the lifestyle as lived by Gypsies.

This latter point often placed me in an awkward position. On the one hand, they were welcoming and keen to talk to me, on the other hand I was being presented with only the partial picture, given my ascribed status of a 'potentially useful contact'. As discussed in the introduction, my identity as a Westerner often, though not always, presided over my status as objective researcher. This posed certain obstacles, yet in so doing revealed interesting qualities inherent to the NGO sector. Ultimately, I represented to many NGO leaders a potential link to Western donors. While impacting upon the way in which certain NGOs chose to present themselves, this factor also served to reveal two interesting points: First, that these NGOs still had relatively little contact with people and institutions in the West, despite relying on them totally for their existence; and second, that they desperately needed more contact and funding.

From this position I was also able to gain more of a general overview of Gypsy NGOs and their place within the overall NGO structure. This distance allowed me to identify a particular trend among these NGOs operating in Bulgaria. The extent to which the aims expressed by each of the NGOs were authentic draws attention to one of the main problems encountered in this type of research. While being alert to the facade they presented (normally reserved for donors), it was still difficult with brief encounters to gauge how far each NGO acted out in practice what they claimed to do in theory. Nevertheless, as set out in Table 6.5 closer contact with a number of these NGOs made it possible to observe that there were four different types of NGOs working with Gypsies: those NGOs run entirely by Gypsies; those by Gypsies but with a mixed ethnic team; those run by Gadjo that also employed Gypsy staff; and, finally, those run and managed entirely by Gadjo.

Table 6.5 shows the ways in which different NGO compositions indicated different emphases in NGO design and strategy. The original premise, their links with external donors and the nature of their relationship to the Gypsy communities, all had implications for the types of strategies they adopted and for the degree to which they emphasised

Gypsy or Gadjo interests. We can see a pattern emerge whereby the four different types fall onto a continuum from type A to D on a number of levels: from direct to indirect approaches, from a view of Gypsies as social agents to Gypsies as marginalised, and from bottom-up to top-down strategies.

Table 6.5 Gypsy NGOs in Bulgaria: A Typology.[46]
(n= number of NGOs of this type that I interviewed)

Type of NGO	Description	Relationship with Gypsy communities and aims
A n = 9	Gypsy led NGO with Gypsy only Staff	Direct based on short term, immediate priorities.
B n = 6	Gypsy led NGO with Gypsy and staff	GDirect based on long term objectives
C n = 3	Gadjo led NGO with Gadjo and Gypsy staff	Indirect based on abstract but also immediate goals.
D n = 7	Gadjo led NGO with Gadjo only Staff	Indirect based on abstract and long Term objectives

The distinctions between NGO types, however, are far from absolute, as indeed there are exceptions. For example, Manush Romanov, a prominent Gypsy leader, works towards long term visionary political ideals, rather than with day-to-day issues as does the type A NGO *Confederation of Roma in Bulgaria*. Conversely, many Gadjo led NGOs, such as CEGA were engaged (albeit indirectly) in practical day-to-day projects as well as maintaining a commitment to more abstract ideals. Therefore it does not suggest that there is a direct causal link between ethnic composition and the chosen strategy of a given NGO, but that NGO strategies at this stage appear to have been shaped by the kind of relations held by NGO members with Gypsy communities. Rather than attempting to fix these NGO types as inevitable this typology describes an emerging trend, which is constantly changing and evolving.[47]

[46] Based on interviews, see Appendices 2 and 3.

[47] For example, Dr. Antonii Galabov who is currently involved in a recent government roundtable on Gypsy issues, spoke of how in the last year there has been a growing trend of Gypsy NGOs joining their efforts and amalgamating. *Radio Free Europe*, Bulgaria, 14.1.99.

Perhaps the most fundamental distinction needs to be made between those NGOs that had originated from within the community and those that had essentially developed from outside it. By drawing attention to the origins of the NGO itself it is possible to make observations about its relations to the community or communities in question and conversely with wider institutional structures. Those NGOs that were composed entirely of Gypsies (Type A) and in particular had employees directly from within the community (even if they had gone away and come back) tended to have a more grounded approach based on direct links with local Gypsies. Their first priority was with dealing with and meeting the demands of Gypsies within their own community. The adoption of human and minority rights was therefore important insofar as meeting these objectives.

Although in this respect they were closest to their community, at the same time they were most distanced from donors. As a result, they were not so heavily influenced by Western rhetoric. This type consisted of a variety of different NGOs, not all of which were born directly from within the community. Some had political roots that extended back into the Communist period and therefore their links with the community were somewhat severed. They were nevertheless well established even though the 1991 Law on Political Parties had rendered illegal their official political role. The Confederation of Roma in Bulgaria (CRB) founded in 1993 was a good example of this kind of NGO.[48]

Peter Gueorguiev, the official leader of the CRB, was one of the few Gypsy MPs to have had a seat in the Bulgarian parliament.[49] However, he began the interview by emphasising that this organisation was non-political, implying a sharp shift from his previous role in parliament to a more 'acceptable' approach of 'providing social, cultural and material support for the Gypsy population'. His responses still contained political rhetoric and he placed an emphasis on creating links with governmental institutions. Rather than taking a separatist approach as regards Gypsies, his work was more informed by a pro-Bulgarian

[48] Interview: A (1) 4.3.97.

[49] The other two Gypsy MPs were Dr. Saby Golemanov and Manush Romanov.

nationalism. Arguing that, "Roma are part of the Bulgarian people – Bulgaria is their homeland", he wanted to invest Gypsies with a 'civic duty' to participate.

Other more recently formed NGOs were more concerned with the practicalities of everyday survival than with the pursuit of wider political ideals, in particular, those NGOs that had derived directly from and established themselves within their own community. 'Justice 96' Society based in Stolipinovo, Plovdiv, was one such NGO. It had only recently been established and its early aims were concerned primarily with local issues of improving basic living conditions, such as repairing the local kindergarten.[50] Their main areas of concern were with providing training for unemployed single mothers and offering advice in different social areas. Another such NGO was a foundation called 'Women for Mercy-Roma' based in Sliven. Founded in Sliven by four Gypsy women, much of their work was also based on meeting basic needs, mainly through the co-ordination and distribution of humanitarian aid as donated by various Western bodies, such as the Danish Embassy. However they also expressed a wider vision above and beyond such tasks, and in particular stressed the need for different ethnic groups to work together.[51]

In contrast were those organisations whose roots lay not so much within a given Gypsy community, but in a commitment to the development of civil society or human rights. These NGOs were run and managed entirely by Gadjo and had developed from outside the community (Type D). They were more closely associated with donors and the Western framework of funding and Gypsies were simply incorporated into existing 'inter-cultural' or 'inter-ethnic' frameworks.[52] Consequently, their strategies regarding Gypsies were ones shaped by a top-down approach and a certain distance was maintained between themselves and Gypsy communities. They referred to themselves as mediator NGOs in that they saw their own role as mediating between Western donors and Gypsy NGOs and/or between state structures and Gypsy NGOs. However, in trying to get out of the

[50] Interview: A (4) 17.10.97.
[51] Interview: A (9) 22.10.97.
[52] For example, D (3) 16.9.97 and D (4) 18.9.97.

trap of being either too superficial or too localised, these NGOs often fell into a series of other traps; such as embarking on projects with long-term ideals but without the necessary groundwork having been completed or without having the resources available.

Lying somewhere in between these were those NGOs that consisted of a mixture of ethnic groups. Those foundations that were led by Bulgarians, but which employed a mixture of ethnic groups including Gypsies (Type C), had gone one step further than Type D NGOs. However, this was often only superficial and in terms of its starting point nothing had changed. Type B NGOs seemed to signal the most dynamic type of NGO. Led by Gypsies but working as part of an ethnically mixed team, these NGOs were able to maintain to varying degrees a balance between keeping close links with Gypsy communities and sticking to the criteria of wider conceptual frameworks associated with the NGO sector. While referring to the liberal rhetoric of human rights and integration, this type of NGO importantly had Gypsies as their starting point, not as a secondary asset.

Many Gypsy-led NGOs were themselves catching onto the idea of mediation and putting themselves forward as 'mediator' NGOs, thus replacing Type C and D NGOs, which, until recently, had had an exclusive hold over this area. These Gypsy NGOs, which were mainly made up of Type B NGOs, mediated directly between donors/local institutions and Gypsy communities. The Foundation for Regional Development and their 'Self-Help Bureau' set itself up as a direct link to the Gypsy community by representing all three major ethnic groups in the community. The staff consisted of 5 Bulgarians, 3 'persons of Turkish origin', and 3 'persons of Roma origin', all working under the leadership of a Gypsy.[53] The Romani Bah Foundation, a Type B NGO also saw their role as fundamentally a mediatory one, as explained by the leader himself,

[53] Foundation for Regional Development, *'REPORT': Activities of the Stolipinovo Self-Help Bureau for the period 8th January-31 December, 1996.*

> *There is a gap between the Roma community and local institutions, the only connection is NGOs - its normal - in the local community there are no Roma leaders and in local government there are no Roma representatives - the mediator is therefore the NGO.*[54]

As well as mediation, Type B NGOs such as The Human Rights Project (HRP) in Bulgaria, carried out specific tasks of providing legal defence for those Gypsies who were prepared and able to put forward a case of either discrimination or violence.[55] These types of NGOs tended to have a more focused agenda, refraining from the hyperactive activities that seemed to characterise most other NGOs. As a result, they were more readily accepted as successful by social actors within the field. An article in the *OSCE-CPRSI Newsletter,* for example, was eager to praise NGOs such as the HRP for their ability to offer real, practical help while at the same time having possible wider implications for reform at the level of the judicial and the wider social system.[56]

The question of survival was central for many NGOs regardless of their type. For some, survival referred to the lives of Gypsies, while for others, it also referred to the life of their own NGO. The Foundation United Ethnos (a Type C NGO), is an example of such a foundation whose prime objective, it seemed, was to sustain its own existence.[57] Seeking funding from abroad was their prime activity, leaving the objectives of working with Gypsies rather vague despite being 'co-run' by a Gypsy.[58] The Roma Foundation, in Rousse (a Type A NGO), was also concerned with everyday survival, but for them the emphasis was on the survival of the most impoverished Gypsies.[59] During this latter interview the two young wealthy Gypsy men who ran this small-scale foundation were keen to distance themselves from such NGOs as United Ethnos which, they argued, were concerned only with self-political gain. They claimed that such foundations only designed projects to promote themselves, in contrast to their own foundation, which was concerned only with offering immediate poverty relief. Although their objectives were

---

[54] Interview: B (2) 17.9.97.

[55] Interview: B (1) 17.3.97.

[56] Elizabeth Winship, "One Bulgarian NGO's Experience", *OSCE - CPRSI Newsletter*, Spotlight on Legal Assistance, 1 (3), December, 1993. p. 3.

[57] Interview: C (1) 11.3.97.

[58] Although their business cards put them down as equal managers it was clear in the interview that Jordan de Meo, who dominated the entire interview, was the one in charge.

[59] Interview: A (2) 12.3.97.

more direct, with sporadic funding and a limited vision, their work was not necessarily anymore effective.

Both the United Ethnos Foundation and the Roma Foundation were keen to show me 'what life was really like for Gypsies in Bulgaria'. De Meo did this by reeling off statistics whereas the Roma foundation took me to see a Gypsy *mahala* on the outskirts of Rousse. In their car, a battered Lada, we went beyond the station to a hillside covered in tumbling houses and huts built around a myriad of mud streets. We slowly drove around, never getting out but occasionally stopping for him to talk to some of the people on the street. No one seemed to notice us sitting in the back. There were open drains, piles of rubbish, and no basic infrastructure. There was a high level of activity, women working (washing, drying clothes) and watching their children playing. On the way back he simply said, 'So, now you see'.

On the other hand, some foundations were more reluctant to take me around a *mahala.* On one such occasion a trip around Stolipnovo was arranged with a foundation, which at the last minute they cancelled. After much discussion they decided it would be too dangerous for me and my interpreter to walk around. Their reasons were that we would look too conspicuous and would attract too much attention. Perhaps their reasons went deeper: to be seen showing 'outsiders' around the ghetto could undermine their claims to being part of the community.

These examples show the ambiguous role Gypsy NGOs have played in the transition. On the one hand, there were NGOs who, on the surface, appeared well organised, such as with Type C NGOs which had a Gypsy member of staff, an office and ideas (this provides an impressive image for Western donors).[60] Yet, interviews and general observations soon revealed that this Gypsy member of staff was no more than a token gesture, that the office became less meaningful if useful activities were not taking place,

[60] De Meo, for example, appeared to be in demand, when later that year a representative of the Minority Rights Group told me they were considering his application for funding.

and finally ideas themselves were not always enough if not practical.[61] Likewise, Type D NGOs and their more overarching approach of working with all minorities and by offering themselves as mediators were often out of touch with the complexity of Gypsy needs. On the other hand, the more practical down-to-earth approach of immediate short-term objectives, as with Type A NGOs, failed to offer effective means for tackling the questions of institutionalised oppression. They did not make 'false' claims to promoting Gypsy interests on a nation-wide scale, yet, what they did offer was localised, small scale and in terms of improving the lives of Gypsies not always effective.

The approach, activities and outcomes of Type B NGOs therefore, seemed to paint a more promising picture. Gypsy led NGOs who took on Gadjos as part of their team were importantly questioning the conventional relationship between Gadjos and Gypsies where the former tends to take on the role of leading the 'backward'. Furthermore, Gypsies working in this type of NGO were more able to find ways of 'using' the NGO sector to enhance forms of everyday survival for Gypsies, if only to limited ends. This 'resistance' was exercised through a subtle interplay of Gadjo concepts with Gypsy culture where integration was not rejected altogether but redefined.

6.8 The role of Gypsy NGOs within the social framework and Gypsy communities

Among Gypsy leaders, competition for credibility and funding was rife. This often led to disputes over the morality of particular persons, however founded or otherwise they may have been. Although rivalry among leaders prevented many NGOs from coming together, the emphasis for NGOs at this level was not so much with resolving the tension between their visible enrichment and social welfare, but more with finding ways to overcome internal political and personal power struggles. The relationship between Gypsy NGOs and their communities, however, was precisely to do with the resolution of the conflict between the interests of the individual and that of the community.

---

[61] For example, De Meo discussed the possibility of convening an on-going seminar on a boat along the river Danube, picking up and dropping off Gypsy participants along the way. Although, this would undoubtedly be a pleasant trip for those concerned, its long-term, or even short-term effects for Gypsies in general would be minimal.

An article by Hart, which examined the relationship between individual enrichment and social welfare in the context of 1970s Ghana, contains many interesting parallels with the situation I observed in Bulgaria.[62] Although, Hart's focus was on the role of the entrepreneur, and by definition a NGO leader is not engaged in entrepreneurial activity, the effect is, I believe, very similar. Both consisted of charismatic individuals even when, in the case of NGOs, they were part of a team, and both involved the accumulation of money, whether it be for staff involved or for the community. Ultimately, tensions were manifested in different ways according to the actors involved, whether it be between the NGOs themselves, NGOs and their community, or NGOs and local authorities. Both in Hart's example and in mine there was evidence that a key concern for the actors involved was to resolve the dialectic of individual enrichment and social welfare, that is, the tension between private interests and the public good.

On several occasions, workers remarked how the notoriously tight grapevine of the Gypsy *mahala* could be relied upon to carry important news, such as changes in social assistance.[63] Despite the advantages of having such a speedy outlet for information, Gypsy NGOs still struggled to gain the trust of their communities, especially when it came to the implementation of longer term projects. According to the type of organisation it was, each NGO had to find different ways of convincing Gypsy communities that they had the community interests as their priority.

For Types A and B NGOs, although in general directly derivative of their community, the adoption of outside mechanisms to help their communities immediately served to push them away. As a result, Gypsy NGOs had to seek ways of counteracting this outward direction by finding ways to re-secure a place within the community. They used such strategies as locating their office within the ghetto and/or employing or taking on as

---

[62] Keith Hart, "Swindler or Public Benefactor? The Entrepreneur in His Community." In Jack Goody (ed.), *Changing Social Structure in Ghana*, International African Institute, London, 1975.

[63] For example, B (2) 17.9.97. On one of the days at the RBF office I was able to witness myself the repercussions of this. Within half an hour of the office receiving application forms for winter aid, a huge crowd of Gypsy women had gathered outside waiting to collect them.

volunteers local Gypsies.[64] Some Gypsy-led NGOs had offices or advice bureaux that were not located within the *mahala*. For example, the main offices for the Human Rights Project was situated in central Sofia. However, this in itself did not seem to pose a major obstacle to their relations with Gypsy communities, in that they maintained regular contact on the ground level through regional offices and fieldworkers.

Other less well organised NGOs faced a barrage of criticism from other NGOs and from representatives of the Gypsy communities, who saw the absence of an office within their *mahala* as another example of failing to meet the real needs of the community. One of the workers for the URU, for example, defended the location of its Bureau in the town centre and away from the *mahala*, by arguing that their aim was to help Gypsies integrate: by being in the town centre, it was hoped that their Bureau would encourage Gypsies to leave the *mahala* more often. In other areas, this NGO had managed to forge better links with one of the Gypsy communities. A Gypsy woman and mother of five children, had recently been beaten to death by four white youths all of whom were still at school.[65] A local journalist and supporter of Gypsy rights explained to me that this had had a deep impact on the local Gypsy community. The URU had responded to this by setting up a fund-raising project to pay for the funeral and help with supporting the remaining family. They had taken on as helpers the widower and her eldest son, who had been forced to leave school in search of work.

For Gadjo NGOs, already outsiders, they did not have this insider's position to work from. Their strategies were therefore more tentative and involved either taking on Gypsy staff, or more commonly adopting Gypsy led NGOs to act as their mediator. Unlike most Gypsy led NGOs their offices were always located away from Gypsy areas based in the city or town centre. The Open Society was a classic example of this. Although its

---

[64] E.g. A (4), B(2), B (3), B (4).

[65] This attack occurred on 20 July 1997 and when one of the attackers were asked why they had done this, he replied that he wanted to kill her because she was a Gypsy. Two of them, both aged 16 years, were sentenced to 1 and 6 months imprisonment on probation, respectively. The other two who were both aged 13 years could not be tried since they were too young. U.S. Department of State, *Bulgaria Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997*, released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 30 January, 1998.

headquarters were situated in high rise offices in the centre of Sofia, the Open Society had clearly attempted to forge closer links with the recipient communities by setting up a national network of Open Society Clubs. However, these clubs still remained at a safe distant from Gypsy quarters, instead often placed within the town centre. Therefore, although the activities of the Open Society may have on the surface appeared fruitful and innovative with the funding of various 'grass root' projects, its own direct links with the community remained elusive.

Despite such attempts, it was still generally the case that, given the urban based nature of NGOs as a whole, Gypsies, and especially those living in rural areas, were not always aware of such NGOs.[66] The complex and often conflicting network of family and clan groups that make up the Gypsy population in Bulgaria, as outlined in Marushiakova's and Popov's work, coupled with the NGOs' inability to understand or work effectively with such complexities, served to make relations between NGOs and communities at times somewhat fraught. By identifying the complex and hierarchical set of relations among Gypsy groups, Marushiakova and Popov served, in their own words, to "reduce to absurdity the thesis about the unity of the Gypsy ethnos" that underpins national policies and most NGO strategies. Popov refers to Gypsies as an "inter group ethnic community" characterised by a unique, hierarchic ethnic self-consciousness. Likewise, Marushiakova's work draws attention to the many divisions that exist among Gypsies not just in terms of cultural practices, religion and lifestyle, for example, but also in terms of the internalisation of Gadjo stereotypes. She gives various examples, such as the 'Turkish Gypsies', who, in the town of Razlog, speak of their 'Bulgarian Gypsy' neighbours as "uncivilised, backward people who can only play and trade" and, "the settled Gypsies [who] accuse the 'kardarash' (former nomad tribe) of lying, stealing and having money to burn."[67] The conflict element to these divisions posed a particular set of problems for those NGOs trying to find ways to represent all Gypsy interests.

---

[66] In most cases the NGOs themselves (particularly Gypsy-led ones) were ready to acknowledge this. For example, interview: B (3) 29.9.97.

[67] Elena Marushiakova, "Relations Among the Gypsy Groups in Bulgaria". In Project on Ethnic Relations (ed.), *The Ethnic Situation in Bulgaria*, Club '90 Publishers, Sofia, 1993.

As a result, sceptics from outside the NGO sector often argued that Gypsy leaders within the NGO sector did not represent the interests of local communities.[68] One example of this was with those NGOs trying to work with entire Gypsy quarters, some of which contained a multitude of different ethnic groupings. This was something I saw for myself during a pre-arranged 'excursion' to Nadejhda. This was the largest Gypsy *mahala* in Sliven consisting of approximately 10,000 inhabitants. The URU, the main Gypsy organisation in the area, arranged my visit to Nadejda. With my interpreter, together with two staff members from the URU, we were driven by Petko (a Gypsy businessman working with URU) to the Mayor's office situated just inside the gates of Nadejda.[69] We drove through the main entrance, clearly demarcating the *mahala* from the surrounding industrial estate and parked up next to the social services building.[70] I was ushered into the Mayor's office, where I met Nikolai Hubanov, the Mayor of Nadejhda. I was also introduced to the rather more hostile Nikolai Kostov, a local representative for the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF). Having sat down around a large table Gorgi explained to them the purpose of our visit. Immediately the Mayor was on the offensive arguing that this was 'his territory' and demanding to know what right the URU had to bring foreigners to Nadejda. The Mayor believed that the URU simply wanted to show foreigners 'the misery' so that they could then request money which they then kept for themselves (that we had arrived in a yellow Mercedes seemed to reinforce his point). The Gypsy communities themselves, he argued, did not see any of this money and as far as he was concerned this organisation had done nothing for Nadejda. (When this was relayed to me by either Vesselina or Maria they seemed to rebuff his comments as nonsense). Despite reasoning from Vesselina who asserted that as a citizen of Sliven she had the

---

[68] For example, Major Krastyo Karadev, a policeman who had worked his entire career in Nadejda believed that the views expressed by Gypsy leaders did not necessarily correspond with those of the various Gypsy communities. Interview: 21.10.97.

[69] Vessilina was a journalist, working for Radio-Free Europe and the daily newspaper *Trud*, and long-time activist for Gypsy rights. She had just recently presented a paper at a conference in Budapest on the Psychology of Intolerance, entitled "Who is (not) tolerable, who is (not) tolerant?" - her argument, she explained, is that intolerance is rooted in fear and that the Bulgarians' hatred of Gypsies is a defence mechanism, 'we are intolerant to others to make ourselves tolerable to ourselves'.

[70] A crowd was gathering outside waiting to collect their social security, the sight of which later scared off the TV crew who were scheduled to do a news item here. Although the crowd were oblivious to us, Vesselina was still nervously concerned for our safety.

right to walk in the streets of her town, he stubbornly refused to co-operate. It was becoming increasingly clear that each party had its own agenda.

Gorgi persisted in trying to persuade the Mayor to give us permission to see the quarter - now a matter of principle for the URU. For a NGO which prides itself on working directly with Gypsies they could not be seen to have been turned away from Nadejda. Finally, Gorgi was granted permission to take us around the *mahala*. However, as we set out, the Mayor decided, significantly at the last minute, not to accompany us. Gorgi believed that the Mayor did not want to be seen by the 'naked Gypsies' as they had been promised basic infrastructural development and as yet nothing had been done. Perhaps this shed light on the Mayor's own agenda: by attempting to refuse permission for our visit he was protecting his own interests.

Nadejda was not homogeneous but made up of distinct and sometimes conflicting groups in terms of religion as well as socio-economic status. Although he was not an inhabitant of Nadejda, Gorgi seemed knowledgeable and showed me the different ways in which the *mahala* was divided. First he took me to the 'worst part', which was inhabited by so-called 'naked Gypsies'. Situated at the far end of the *mahala* under the towering industries that overlooked it, they were visibly much poorer in that their homes were in a more severe state of dilapidation and children could be seen playing in extreme conditions of poor sanitation. I was told that a boundary existed between this part and the rest of the *mahala*, essentially a 'ghetto within a ghetto'. Inhabitants from other parts of the *mahala* rarely entered this part and those within it rarely ventured out.

I was then taken to the Gredeshka part of the *mahala*, which was inhabited by Gypsies whose identity was rooted in their common town of origin, Gredeshka. Judging from the general state of the buildings and sanitation, although still in poor condition was relatively better than the area inhabited by 'naked Gypsies'. One difference was that there were people in groups on the road side doing work of some variety, such as shelling nuts. The Musicians' quarter in which lived those Gypsies whose traditional occupation was

music performance, showed a marked difference in that it was quieter and less crowded. Finally, there was the Turkish quarter where those who defined themselves as either Turks or Turkish Gypsies lived. This was by far the best area with houses that were in relatively good condition and with little activity on the street. Although there were no physical boundaries between these quarters, each area was distinct in terms of housing structures, sanitary conditions and level of activity on the street. Despite the differences within this *mahala*, many NGOs in the Sliven region claimed to be working for the development of Nadejda as a whole. This led to problems of ineffectiveness and the kind of open resentment towards NGOs as explained above.[71]

On returning to the office in the town centre, the URU treated me to lunch in a nearby restaurant. I was then subject to an emotional plea by Maria asking for my collaboration. In the face of such misery, she asked how I could refuse. They were employing the very tactic that they had been accused of by Hubanov and that they had dismissed as nonsense. This almost aggressive tactic, while illustrating Hubanov's point, also served to show the level of their desperation in trying to find sources of help for the vast expanse of Gypsy deprivation.

6.9 NGO dynamics: The self-limitations of the NGO sector in Bulgaria

For those Gypsies and Gadjos formally involved within the NGO sector, whether as employed staff or as volunteers, there were a series of agendas in operation at any one time. Whereas for some, it was a question of acquiring an income, for others it was a means of professional advancement. A female Gypsy employee of a Type B NGO, for example, often referred to her role within the NGO as a means of professional advancement.[72] This was well illustrated when she continued working there, against her family's wishes, for a period of four months when there were no wages. Another motive was an earnest belief in their NGO as a means of putting something back into their own

---

[71] Marushiakova, "Relations among the Gypsy groups", *op. cit.*, and Vesselin Popov, "Bulgarian Gypsies (Ethnic Relations)." In Project on Ethnic Relations (ed.), *The Ethnic Situation in Bulgaria*, Club '90 Publishers, Sofia, 1993.

[72] Participant observation between 3 - 14. 11. 97.

communities. For example, the co-ordinator of the Roma programme at the Open Society expressed how much she liked her job, not just for the money but because she felt she was doing something for her own community.[73]

Ultimately, however, both Gypsy and Gadjo NGOs were operating within three different structures: ideological, formal and informal, which either inhibited or enhanced the effectiveness of their activities.

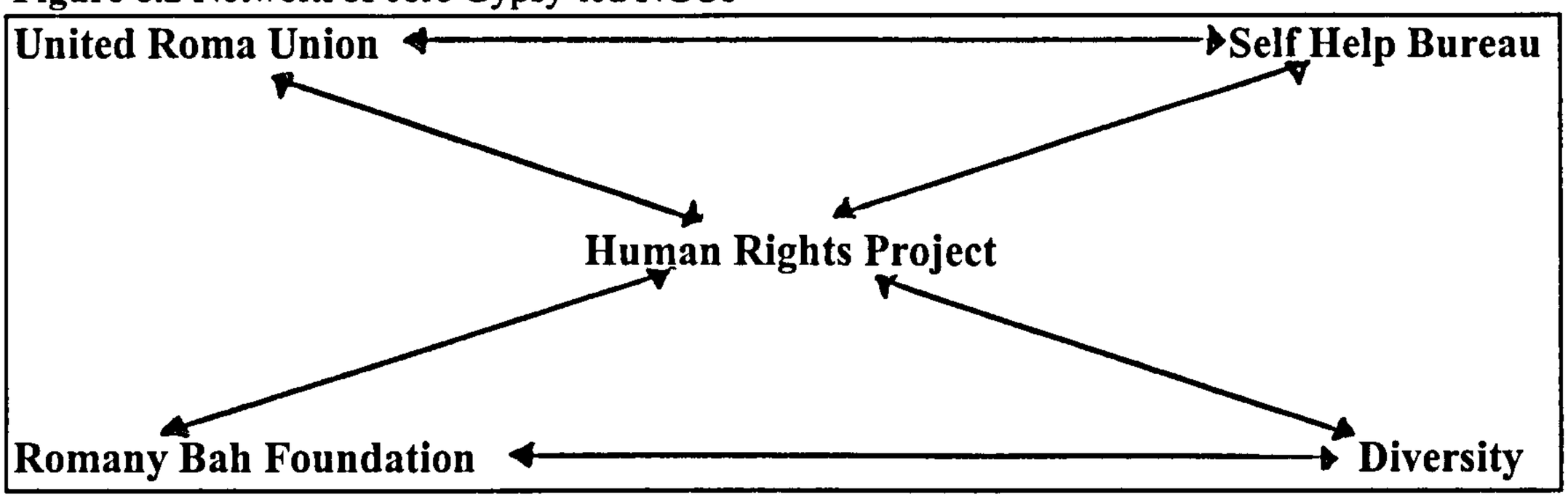
- Ideologically, they had to conform to the criteria set out by Western donors which shaped their activities towards embracing abstract ideals of integration, democracy and civil society.
- The formal structure of the NGO sector and its need for quick tidy results required that they treat Gypsies as a homogenous group. This often led to problems of under-representation and ineffectiveness. Many Gypsy NGOs were trying to overcome this by finding ways to have more control over their projects, such as by seeking direct links with the financiers and avoiding the mediator.
- Finally, the informal network of relations and contacts that underpinned the NGO sector meant that power politics and personal conflicts tended to reign. The other aspect, of course, was that at the informal level they had the potential to manipulate key concepts associated with the NGO sector in their search for new survival strategies.

Most of the NGOs I met with in Bulgaria had unstable incomes and future plans were based on hopes rather than concrete objectives. This instability underpinned the dynamics of Gypsy NGOs. Leaders, faced with limited funding and restricted institutional support, often found themselves in competition with each other. A pattern soon emerged where a set of core NGOs could be identified as interconnected either directly or indirectly. These NGOs could be identified as core based on the following criteria: extensive working contacts; considered as most credible (measured by level of support from external

[73] Interview: C (3) 31.10.97.

donors); most active (measured by the quality of their projects rather than their quantity). The other NGOs were either spin-offs of these NGOs, or were entirely independent of them. United Roma Union, Sliven, for example, had links with all three elements of the third sector: international NGOs; government-led initiatives; and other indigenous NGOs. Within the framework of Gypsy NGOs, the URU also had links with all the types of NGOs, from A to D.

Figure 6.2 Network of core Gypsy-led NGOs



The Foundation for Regional Development was one of its key links, which, in turn, had widespread connections. They helped up and coming Type A NGOs, together with building on existing projects with Type D NGOs, a part of which involved extensive contact with international grant making foundations. Ultimately, it was the Human Rights Project and its nation-wide structure that provided the links for all these core NGOs. The Romany Bah Foundation was a core NGO mainly linked with the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, but which was also in contact with other well established Type B and D NGOs, and had formal links with Gypsy NGOs abroad. However, it was mainly due to its links with the Human Rights Project a Type B NGO, that put the Romany Bah Foundation in the same network as the above mentioned NGOs (see Figure 6.2). The central role taken by type B NGOs indicates the way in which both Types A and D view links with these NGOs as important for different reasons: for Type D establishing links with a type B NGO means forging closer relations with Gypsy communities; for Type A NGOs it means increased contact with donors and more prosperous NGOs.

Major rivalries however, were characteristic of the NGO sector in Bulgaria especially among Gypsies. These antagonisms were rooted in a mixture of political and personal hostilities that had lingered from the Communist period, which during the transition had been fuelled further due to an increase in competition for scarce resources. Fully funded projects, therefore, become precious possessions that NGOs tended to guard close to their chest.[74] Accusations often ranged from incapacity, and illegality, to political and economic corruption. This rivalry was particularly striking when on a number of occasions I interviewed former NGO partners who had subsequently split. In all the cases with which I was familiar, they had set up an NGO together, fallen out and then gone their separate ways. They continued to work in the same area, however, both claiming that they were the inheritors of the original NGO. This was evident in my meetings with two separate NGOs in Plovdiv. Although neither explicitly acknowledged the situation to me, it was obvious from what each of the leaders had said that they had in the past worked together (i.e. they spoke of the same projects, and then a change in direction).[75] Other sources from within the NGOs, also revealed to me that there was some antagonism between these two leaders, but regardless of what each claimed, it was clear that there had been a winner and a loser. One of the NGOs had become a core NGO, with multiple donors and numerous projects underway. The leader of the Foundation for Regional Development (FRD) talked of his plans to make a Gypsy film in Italy, to go to a Gypsy conference in Romania, start an English course, and to set up a small library with support already from UNICEF, UNESCO, Novib, Phare/Tacis and others. The other NGO, in contrast, was in a markedly more drab office setting and currently out of work.

Non-Gypsy led NGOs (Type D) tended to form more of an inclusive group that collaborated exclusively together in their general operations. For example, members of the International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR), such as

---

[74] During my fieldwork, I was often confronted with antagonism between NGOs. On revealing the names of other NGOs that I was due to meet, I would lay myself open to attack. I was often warned by one NGO to be cautious of what the 'other' NGO would tell me. For example, when a leading NGO in Sliven learnt of my meeting with a key rival, two of its members took me aside to 'brief' me. They warned me to be cautious, for this NGO, they claimed, was totally invalid.

[75] Interviews: B (3) 29.9.97 and B (4) 1.10.97.

Dr. Bobby Bobev (member of the Historical Experts Council for IMIR) were involved in the work of the Inter Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights (IEI). These two NGOs were connected via other NGOs too, such as the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee. In the implementation of specific projects however, their links tended to be with NGO types other than their own, which given their self-proclaimed function as mediators was understandable. The bulk of their work was with Type B NGOs more so than with other Type D NGOs, and hardly at all with Type A NGOs. This revealed to some extent that there were divisions among non-Gypsy NGOs, however subtle they may have been.

These divisions were played down and acknowledged only in terms of "seeking to specialise in order to avoid overlapping" [76] or as Bossanyi (IEI) carefully put it, in his justification for not having worked with other similar NGOs up until now, "we thematically overlap with [...] but geographically we don't."[77] Their almost exclusive relations with Type B NGOs (who also defined themselves as mediators) also undermined their own claim that they served a mediatoral function. What has often been conceived of by Type D NGOs as forming direct links with Gypsies, has in fact been no more than another link in the chain. This has led to the peculiar situation, also noted by Marushiakova and Popov, that Type C and D NGOs are now having to compete with Type B NGOs for links with Gypsy NGOs.[78]

6.10 The NGO hierarchy

Type D NGOs were at the 'top' of the NGO sector, rather than at its centre, in that they were closer to those giving out money, but not to the relevant communities. These NGOs had greater resources, contacts and bargaining power, which was made possible by them being the most popular choice for investment among Western donors. They had an almost exclusive hold over decision making despite their emphasis on bottom-up initiatives. Continuing with this hierarchical analysis, we can argue that Type A NGOs were situated

---

[76] Interview: D (3) 16.9.97.

[77] Interview: D (4) 18.9.97.

[78] Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, "Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria - Literacy, Policy and Community Development (1985-1995)", *Alpha*, UNESCO, Institute for Education, 1997.

at the 'bottom' of the NGO sector. They are defined as such in terms of their relation to the source of funding, i.e. they were the furthest away. They had to negotiate and seek help up though the hierarchy in order to get funding. Having the right connections with already successful NGOs was vital for their survival and for the growth of NGOs in general. Those who became successful were those who dominated the NGO sector and although the most able were the least willing to challenge the hierarchical structure.

This top-down hierarchy was beginning to change, however, as external donors were becoming aware that Type D NGOs were not necessarily the most appropriate NGOs for meeting the needs of Gypsy communities. This was primarily fuelled by a concern with accountability and leaking of funds. By creating more direct links with Gypsy-led NGOs they hoped to cut out some of the 'middlemen' and so some of the expenses. On their part, Gypsy-led NGOs were equally concerned with forging more direct relations with donors as it was also in their interest to avoid the middlemen. In this way, they could gain more control over the designs and implementation of projects. One of the negative repercussions of this squeeze however, was the tightening up of the application procedure. Applying for project funding has become an incredibly lengthy and complicated process, which serves to discourage many new NGOs from applying.

The hierarchical structure which arose from this reliance on external funding was particularly evident in the land project being co-run by the Self-Help Bureau at the Foundation for Regional Development, Plovdiv. This project, aimed at giving land to landless Gypsies in the Plovdiv region, was originally set up in 1993. This project arose out of extensive research carried out in 1993 with over 70 villages which, together with meetings with local authorities, identified the main problems with current land law. From this they formed a lobby at the Ministry of Agriculture, the Council, the Presidency and the Parliament. By the beginning of 1995 amendments were made concerning the regulations for the giving of land to the landless. The most important was the initial payment required to purchase land was reduced from 20 per cent to 2 per cent of the total cost of the land. While allowing for more families to acquire land, it opened up a series

of new problems. Money was still needed for equipment and seeds in order to cultivate the land. This led to the development of the current land project.

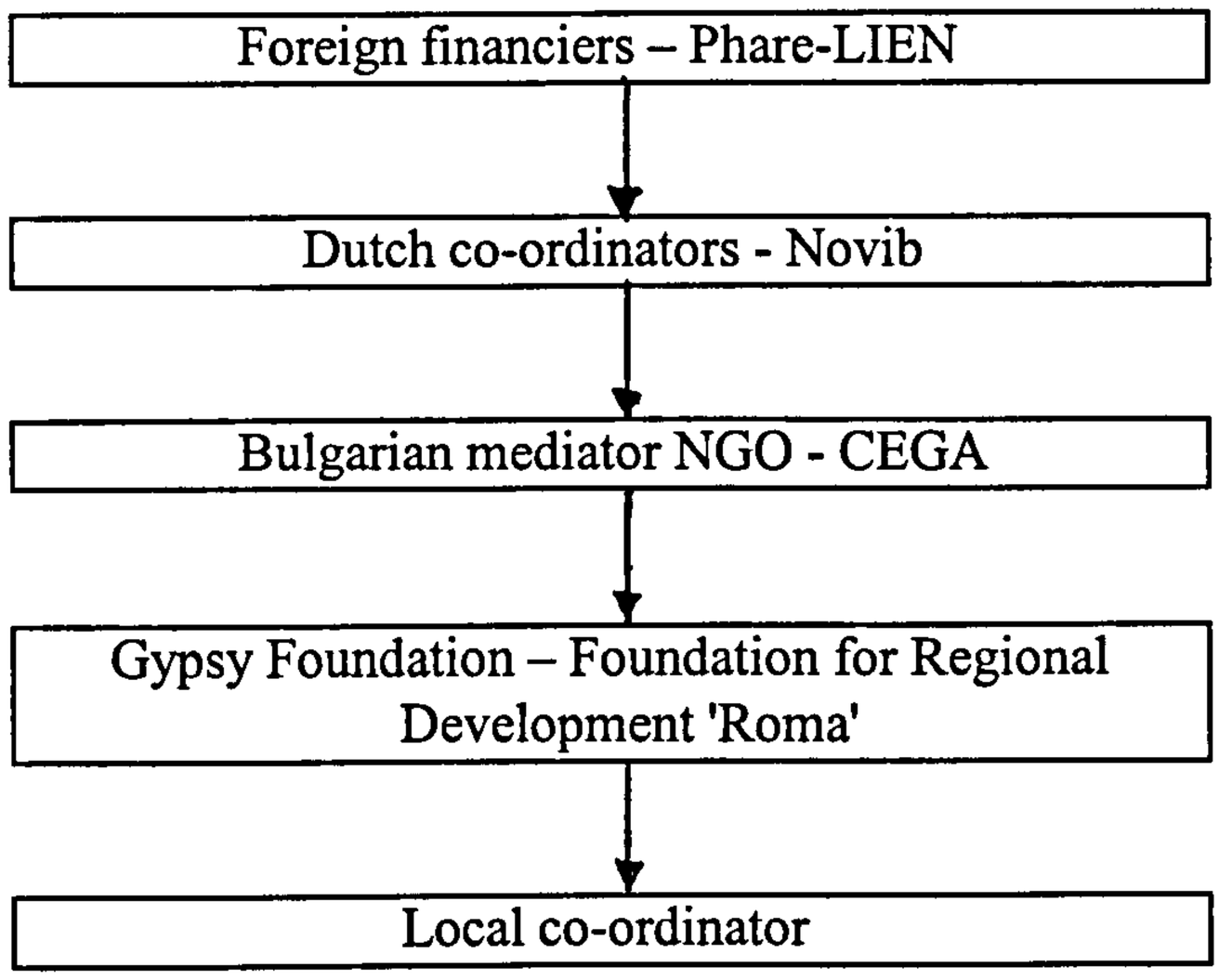
Chalakovo was one of the villages with which they were working and lies to the north west of Plovdiv. This village is one of a distinctive few that has a Gypsy majority (due to the urban migration of Bulgarians during industrialisation under Communism). I was taken there one day by some of the workers from the Self-Help Bureau in a four-wheel drive jeep. Just before entering the village, we veered off the road and on to what could barely be called a track across fields towards some distant figures. They turned out to be the local co-ordinators of this land project that SHB, CEGA and Novib were currently involved on. Nasko, Angul and his wife were tending to their field of tomatoes when we reached them. We then continued on into the village centre taking Angul and his wife with us. When we got there Nasko (my interpreter), Angul and I went in search of the Mayor. He was not there so instead I talked to Angul about life here in the village and his work.[79] He explained to me some of the problems they were currently having. He had just learnt that their 3 year contract of material support was being cut short without his prior consultation. Plans to introduce a credit system to replace funding were to go ahead based on the argument that Gypsies have to stop depending on hand-outs regardless of the farmers' claims that most families would be prevented from continuing and that if the agreed time-scale of three years had been kept to then such families would in the end become self-sustaining.

This land project was made possible by funding from the Phare-LIEN programme and Novib (a non-Gypsy Dutch Foundation). This was then allocated to CEGA (a non-Gypsy Bulgarian 'mediator' organisation - Type D) which distributed it according to how it saw fit. They chose to give money to Foundation for Regional Development (FRD) (a Gypsy foundation - Type B) who co-ordinated this land project at the local level. The last in the chain of these NGOs had the least control and say and it was this latter NGO that the farmer was working with (see figure 6.3). Having spoken with members from each of

[79] Interview: 9.10.97.

these levels in the chain, it was possible to observe how the problems identified by the local co-ordinator did not necessarily originate in their relations with the FRD but in the nature of the hierarchical structure.

Figure 6.3 Hierarchical chain of NGOs



Various FRD reports marked the development and progress of the land project, both in Chalakovo and in a number of other villages. In January 1996 it was agreed by councillors from Rakovski, the Mayor of the Municipality, the Mayor of Chalakovo and the Chair of the Land Commission in Belozem to give 1,200 decares of Municipal land to 158 landless families in Chalakovo. This amounted to 3 decares per family.[80] This was further increased to 1,333 decares for a total number of 221 families. It was envisaged by the FRD that there would be a three year scheme for material support for those renting the land: "In the first year funding will be secured for machines, seeds, chemicals, fertilisers and irrigation. This funding will be repaid by 10 per cent from the harvesting of the crop. In the second year 30 per cent of the funding will be repaid, and in the third year 50 per cent will be repaid. From the fourth year onwards the families need to be self-sufficient in their agricultural activities."[81] Although it was unclear at what point the decision was taken in the chain to withdraw this agricultural support before the agreed three year time scale, the fact that this remained vague was some indication of the lack of transparency in

[80] 1 decare equals 10,000 square metres. Foundation for Regional Development, *'REPORT': Work Done and Results Achieved in the Project "Land Settlement for Landless Roma Families"*, 1996.
[81] Foundation for Regional Development, *Project Land Report,* Plovdiv, Bulgaria, 1997. p. 3.

the decision-making. In contrast, the FRD report explicitly stated that all of the financial support for families renting the land must be repaid, and that families must become self-sustaining.[82]

This highlighted one of the main problems with this type of structure. The mediator Type C NGOs set themselves up to ease the flow of communication between the donors and the recipients with the aim of conducting a two way relationship. However, these mediator NGOs were in danger of serving only to widen the gap between these two actors, whereby decision making was diffused but at the same time lost along the way. This leads to the situation outlined above whereby workers at the ground level may have had an input into ideas about project implementation, for example, but were the last to know about major decisions on funding.

6.11 A case study: A NGO seminar

The complexity of NGO dynamics and its constraints was illustrated well in the case of a seminar organised by CEGA concerning their project with FRD and Novib (25-26.9.97). There was a representative present from the Novib headquarters in the Netherlands, but no-one from Phare-LIEN, who had been the overall donors of this project. It was a seminar aimed at assessing the successes and failures of the Self-Help Bureau, a project which had been set up 2 years ago and had now reached its 'completion'. The seminar was held at the Open Society Club situated in central Plovdiv. The Dutch representative and I shared an official interpreter who had been hired specifically for his purposes.[83] Craft work, traditional clothing, metalwork and tools coupled with a photo exhibition displayed around the room set the formal atmosphere.

There was a large turn out consisting mainly of NGO members from regions throughout Bulgaria. Together with the SHB staff, there were NGO leaders from: Sofia (Stefan

---

[82] Foundation for Regional Development, *op. cit.* p. 7. These reports were produced for their donors, so one has to consider that the foundation must show efficiency in their accounting for funding. The extent to which these targets were realistic was of second priority.

[83] This had the interesting effect of giving the impression I was also a representative of Novib. As a result a few members of the audience approached me in the break asking me very graciously if they could talk to me.

Stefanov); Sliven (URU); Lom; Veliko Turnovo; and Stara Zagora. School teachers, Gypsy 'experts', educational specialists, and representatives from the Government Employment Bureau were also present. This cross-section of people provided a very promising picture of established relations between local government, non-Gypsy NGOs and Gypsy NGOs. However, as the debates grew more heated, it became apparent that there were many undercurrents and fundamental problems still to be resolved. As we watched the film that CEGA had produced telling us about Stolipinovo and their project, and as we listened to their presentations and words of thanks, there was a bitterness that simmered throughout.

One of the main issues raised was that there were no official state representatives present, which, many felt, made this whole seminar pointless. CEGA, forced to explain this absence, claimed that they had been invited but that the state officials had declined. Most of the representatives present were reluctant to speak of this project as a victory - recognising failures as well as successes. There was a general consensus that links with state institutions needed to be developed in order to achieve sustained change. Kris, the Novib representative, in contrast, stressed the importance of mediator NGOs in forging links with Western donors. He explained that he chose to fund CEGA because they worked with Gypsies rather than on their behalf. But no-one broached the obvious question of why he had not sought direct links with the Gypsy organisations themselves.

The feedback session provided a forum for the participants to speak out. Gypsies and non-Gypsies alike made the most of this opportunity, and a significant number expressed angry, if not passionate sentiments. Gadjos who had featured on the film and who had developed close links with the SHB over the course of the 2 years reaffirmed their support for such ventures, such as an officer from the Employment Bureau, a nurse from the regional hospital, teachers, and other Gypsy NGO leaders and project workers. A Professor of Sociology from the University of Plovdiv was invited to speak. He too placed the solution to the 'Gypsy problem' as lying with the development of relations with the state, without which, he argued, there was no chance of any real improvement. Ideas

were discussed as how best to nurture such relations. Suggestions were proposed, such as co-ordinating their work with the state, bringing state institutions more into the process, showing initiative before asking for money, involving Gypsies at the fundamental level, and uniting Gypsy NGOs to form a cohesive force.

The organisation of the second day was quite different. Set in a school in Stolipinovo, away from the centre, the atmosphere was less formal and more relaxed. Having arranged a lift to the school with a CEGA co-ordinator to Stolipinovo I was able to catch a glimpse of some of the subtle tensions that existed between the partner NGOs themselves. It soon became obvious that this particular CEGA co-ordinator did not know the way to Stolipinovo, the Gypsy *mahala* in which the Self-Help Bureau (SHB) was situated. This revealed that her contact with the project on a practical level had not been as extensive as we had been led to believe. Indeed, a report written by a colleague from India who visited the SHB in June 1997 to offer advice on how best to structure and develop their land projects, put down as one of his recommendations "CEGA to visit the villages more often."[84] Kris too, picked up on this and made a few ironic comments to the effect that, "if the organiser of the project does not know the way, the NGO has obviously not been involved much."

The school was large and appeared to be in no worse condition than other schools I had seen.[85] There was a series of working groups based around some of the issues raised the previous day. There were three parallel sessions available to choose from: Education, Social Problems and Unemployment/Economic Development, held in three separate classrooms. I chose to partake in the discussion group on education. A woman from Plovdiv University led our group and was already familiar with most of the people there. There were many young people there from the Youth Club (SHB), as well as teachers, directors, education specialists and NGO leaders/workers (about 20 altogether). We

---

[84] Foundation for Regional Development, *'Memo': Meeting between Sam and the people from the villages of Mominsko and Borets*, 1997.

[85] What I saw of Stolipinovo at this stage was very different to the *mahalas* I had visited in both Rousse and Sofia. In terms of what I saw on the outskirts, it was more built up with blocks of flats and more infrastructure including a bus route.

started off with an open circle - introducing ourselves and explaining who we were and why we were there. We then split ourselves into groups based on our role in education, i.e. according to whether you were a student, teacher, mediator, or NGO. The CEGA representative chose to go in the mediator group, and the Gypsy leaders were split between the NGO and mediator group. I joined Kris and his interpreter in one of the NGO groups.

In this group there was Stefan Stefanov, a Gypsy NGO leader, a Gypsy head teacher, and some young Gypsy women. Within each group we were asked to discuss past problems and achievements in terms of this project and others. Kris took it upon himself to lead our discussion through his interpreter by asking the people in our group questions. A young Gypsy woman first spoke, talking about her experience as a teacher at the Summer School in Stolipinovo. It ran for 10 weeks and was held at the kindergarten. She saw it as successful in that they helped children with basic Bulgarian and maths by playing games and learning songs. She explained that although it was difficult at first to get the support of parents, meetings between teachers and parents gradually turned this around. The purpose of this summer school, as she saw it, was to build up self-esteem and make the children feel proud of who they were. A NGO leader from Sofia then spoke up of the problems of education which they still had to deal with. He reeled off various figures on the high drop out and absenteeism rates. Then a director of a Gypsy school in Veliko Turnovo undercut these sweeping figures with the claim that in his school the drop out rate was very low - lower than in Bulgarian schools.[86]

Before lunch, the three groups reconvened and a representative from each gave a report back of their main findings. The most important issues that needed considering, as agreed upon in our group, included educating the teachers, problems of the language barrier, and the need to making school more interesting and relevant with better facilities.

---

[86] Vassil Chaprazov (URU) had an ominous presence in the working group and kept on abruptly correcting people with 'Roma' when they said 'Cigani.' During the small break Kris (Novib) was saying how unimpressed he was with Vassil Chaprazov and that he would not be giving him any more funding. The interpreter also was offended by him and said "his anger only builds walls" and that he served only to disrupt the session.

The tension between teaching of Bulgarian or Romany was a theme that underpinned the general debate. Attention was dwindling by his time, and the numbers present were considerably reduced from the morning and more so from the day before. No firm conclusions were made, nor specific strategies discussed. However, that such a vast array of divergent social actors had been brought together, was celebrated as a major achievement in itself.

Many of the complaints raised during the seminar reflected wider concerns within the Gypsy NGO sector. The most common being that the state not only neglected Gypsy interests but actively put up obstacles to them. Yet, the state relied on the NGO sector to 'solve' the problems brought about by its own withdrawal, such as welfare provision. Rather than taking direct action against the government and demanding that Gypsies be put on the political agenda, however, Gypsy leaders continued to put most of their efforts into seeking funds from abroad. Using external funding allowed for a certain freedom in devising projects for promoting Gypsy interests. But, this outward looking approach allowed for the government's continued campaign of neglecting Gypsy interests, and at the same time helping to boost their own claim that, they, the government, were nurturing a civil society. As Marushiakova and Popov argue, the NGO sector remains a closed, small stratum. This not only questions the extent to which NGOs are helping to create a civil society, but also whether or not they represent for Gypsies real and effective agents of social change.[87]

6.12 Conclusion

There are two types of problems associated with those NGOs in Bulgaria working with Gypsies. First, the nature of the NGO sector itself and secondly the complex nature of the various Gypsy communities living in Bulgaria. The NGO sector with its community development approach rests on the idea that Gypsy communities are 'underdeveloped.' The underlying principle is therefore that the NGO sector can solve the 'Gypsy problem' by civilising them. This top-down approach is said to be challenged by participatory

[87] Marushiakova and Popov, *Gypsies (Roma), op. cit*; and "Gypsy Minority", *op. cit.*

methods but it still remains that Gypsy interests often remain underrepresented.[88] Marushiakova and Popov take a very cynical view towards the NGO sector making the point that Gadjo led organisations who claim to work on behalf of Gypsies in the interests of furthering civil society have very little, if at all, in-depth or first hand knowledge of Gypsy life.[89]

> *Almost all of the newly emerged non-governmental organisations rushed to solve the problems of Gypsies, to help them and defend their rights, to build civic education, community development, conflict resolutions and others. This simple phraseology has proved to contain the magical words that can provide financial aid from abroad regardless of the actual activities of the organisations and how far they have any vague idea about Gypsies and Gypsy problems.*[90]

Within the context of such problems that permeate the NGO sector, the following chapter critically examines two alternative readings of Gypsy responses during the transition: first, the accepted view that unless Gypsies participate in democratic institutions, such as the NGO sector, they are subject to forces that make their behaviour deviant, or at best backward; and second, the alternative view that anti-social behaviour associated with Gypsies, far from representing signs of deviancy, instead indicates rational resistance strategies. Ultimately, the discussion draws elements from both and recognises that the NGO sector represents to Gypsies a new form of incorporation. Rather than an indication of their total compliance with mainstream norms, both their participation and leading role in the NGO sector can, instead, be seen to reveal a concern with finding a balance between articulating Gypsy interests in the formal sphere on the one hand and enhancing 'hidden resistance' in the informal sphere on the other.

---

[88] The gap between rhetoric and practice in the world of NGOs is not exclusive to Eastern Europe and Gypsies but have been identified in other countries and contexts. E.g. Rachel Hinton "NGOs as Agents of Change? The Case of the Bhutanese Refugee Programme", *Cambridge Anthropology*, 19 (1), 1996.

[89] Marushiakova and Popov, "Gypsy Minority", *op. cit.*

[90] *Ibid.* p. 5.

CHAPTER 7

INTERPRETING THE HIDDEN DIMENSION

7.1 Introduction

Thus far, two levels of responses on the part of Gypsies have been described: informal everyday survival strategies and the more formal NGO response both at the national and international levels. This chapter sets out first to address the question of whether these responses indicate that Gypsies are suffering from 'social exclusion', and second to test what we will argue is the 'Achilles heel' of social exclusion theory, that is, its NGO strategy of inclusion.[1] In order to carry out these tasks, we must first examine the different ways in which Gypsy responses can be interpreted. However, this is not a simple issue as the very process of interpreting the responses of oppressed groups to wider society inevitably has ideological and political implications.

At one end of the scale is the view that the oppressed group in question is totally trapped within an 'oppressed mentality.' This assumption has informed underclass, culture of poverty and marginality theses and now to some extent that of social exclusion. Jenkins, for example, argues that when a minority group is publicly and institutionally categorised as bearers of negative traits, it directly intervenes to shape their aspirations. The oppressed minority, therefore, comes to think of itself in the language of the oppressor and any response on its part is inevitably shaped by this.[2] Conventional interpretations of Gypsy responses during the transition have tended to fall into this

---

[1] For example, when President of the Commission, Delors spoke out at a conference entitled, "Combating Exclusion, Promoting Integration" (2-3 April 1992) against the fact that millions of EC citizens lived in poverty and a state of social exclusion. His response was to combat social exclusion by encouraging the improvement of NGO participation in official programmes. Marielle Danbakli, *On Gypsies: Texts Issued by International Institutions*, Gypsy Research Centre, CRDP Midi-Pyrénées, Paris, 1994. p. 19.

[2] Richard Jenkins, "Rethinking Ethnicity: Identity, Categorization and Power", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 17 (2), April, 1994.

camp, resting on a set of assumptions about their 'backwardness' and 'deviancy' that serve to reinforce rather than question existing prejudices. The most common liberal view tends to dismiss informal survival strategies as 'anti-social behaviour' instead focusing on the benefits of formal participation, especially that of the NGO sector.

At the extreme other end of the scale are interpretations which see the oppressed as conscious of their oppression and as capable of finding ways to not only articulate a clear response to it, whatever form this may take, but of finding ways to actively resist it. This is the stance taken by James C. Scott, who, in his studies of peasant resistance, rebuts the postmodern rejection of social agency.[3] His view of 'everyday resistance' offers an alternative reading to the conventional approach that views the oppressed as either 'deviant' or 'backward'. By recognising the obstacles that prevent subordinated groups from genuine formal participation, this approach injects positive values into so-called negative anti-social behaviour. It does so by referring to the very same popular Gypsy stereotypes as focused on in the liberal approach, but instead turning them on their head.

Within this framework I critically examine both these readings of Gypsy behaviour. Problems with both the liberal interpretation and that of resistance are revealed in order to demonstrate those elements which must be extracted in order to understand fully the context in which Bulgarian Gypsies must operate. While recognising that formal strategies of integration are not the answer, it is still an inescapable survival strategy for many Gypsies active within the NGO sector. Likewise, although informal everyday resistance has been central to the survival of Gypsies as an ethnic group, it is not always been recognised as such by themselves or others, nor is it always immediately productive. Ultimately, the emerging NGO sector in Eastern Europe does not necessarily

[3] James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1985; *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1976; *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, Yale University Press, New Haven, London, 1990.

represent for Gypsy leaders a process of inclusion, but a site of conflict through which attempts are made at incorporation from below. Within this realm, resistance in its many forms is still a relevant strategy, not so much in terms of articulating resistance to the NGO structure itself, but by incorporating the structure in order to enhance resistance at a more general level, such as with the promotion of Gypsy culture and language.

7.2 The liberal interpretation: The 'positive response'

The liberal approach to problems of the transition in Eastern Europe is not uniform, but made up of a complex array of actors. Nevertheless within this it is possible to identify broadly two camps, those with an explicit agenda of liberal imperialism and those with a genuine concern for securing rights within a social democratic vision. Although they do differ in their use of liberal frameworks, in that the latter may be more subversive in their concerns for enhancing resistance potential, in terms of the following the implications of both for shaping conventional views of Gypsies during transition are essentially the same: First, there is the general view that the countries in Eastern Europe need to undergo a learning curve with the guidance of Western institutions. The EU, for example, as part of its wider concern with 'preparing' countries for accession defines its own role as central to the process of "[helping] along in the process of economic restructuring [...] and to encourage the switch to a market economy."[4]

Second, and as discussed in chapter 6, participating in the NGO sector, and so 'civilised life', is commonly seen and taken as the 'proper' and 'right' response to the transition. This is evident in the way that many Western institutions are channelling their East European funding into the NGO sector. The European Commission through Phare and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) have been very

[4] Eurostat, *Europe in Figures*, 4th edition, 1995. p. 18.

explicit in their financial support of NGOs defining them as necessary, progressive and democratic. For example, a project funded (US$698,000) and directed by USAID to Bulgaria, entitled *Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFECR*), was carried out between 1993 and 1995. Its project description read as follows: "[to] strengthen citizen participation in Bulgaria through civic participation; through National Democratic Institute grant activities; increase the management leadership and organisational capabilities of BAFECR leaders at the national and local level, resulting in a strong and sustained nation-wide non-partisan advocacy organisation."[5] Although NGOs are not referred to explicitly, the emphasis on building civic participation is clearly the thrust behind their support.

Third, it is generally believed that the participation of Gypsies within the NGO sector signals the way forward for both themselves and for society as a whole. This is informed by the view that Gypsies in Eastern Europe are socially excluded and unless integrated pose a threat to stability. Dr. Saby Golemanov, a Gypsy, who, at the time was an MP in Bulgaria, sums up the rationale of many Gypsies involved in the NGO sector,

> *Gypsies have intellectual capabilities and can take part in the political, economic, and cultural life here. The problems with Gypsies and their tragic fate is not due to genetics. Gypsies are Homo Sapiens and have the possibility to have a civilised life.*[6]

Taken together, these three elements reveal how the promotion of Gypsy NGOs in Eastern Europe by dominant institutions in the West is rooted in a series of connected assumptions: the West is the only social and economic model to follow: NGOs are democratic institutions that can enable the equal participation of 'excluded' groups; and

---

[5] USAID, *Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFECR*), 1996.

[6] Quoted in T. Zang *Destroying Ethnic Identity - The Gypsies of Bulgaria. A Helsinki Watch Report*, New York, June, 1991. p. 19. The use by Golemanov of the word 'Gypsy', as opposed to 'Rom', reveals how 'Cignani' is still used by Gypsy leaders in Bulgaria despite it being a pejorative term. Indeed, Marushiakova and Popov highlight that 'Cigani' is still used informally by many Gypsies in local languages amongst themselves. They give one example whereby in Bulgaria and Romania, the generic self-appellation of a Kalderash group is 'Roma Ciganiaka'.

Gypsies need to be provided with a mechanism for participation, in order to progress out of their 'exclusion'.[7] Those who persist in the use of concepts such as 'social exclusion', even those who do not hold such a naive liberal view and whose work rests on a more earnest belief in social rights ultimately help to sustain rather than challenge these assumptions.

As part of their contribution to civil society, NGOs are given a pivotal role in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. Gypsy activists, keying into this social exclusion debate, are just as keen as any other group to find out exactly what this programme entails. For example, in a written question (no. 1562/92) to the European Community (16 June 1992) (92/C 285/97) Mr. Juan de Dios Ramirez-Heredia, a Gypsy representative, enquired as to what concrete measures the Commission were intending to take regarding NGO participation. The reply re-emphasised the EC's pledge to combat social exclusion by developing a permanent dialogue with NGOs engaged in combating poverty, and by building on existing financial support provided for a European Anti-Poverty Network. However, specific details extended only so far as to describe the holding of regular meetings.[8]

Within this rather general framework of NGO funding, there has been an equally vague interest in Gypsy causes. Nearly all of the NGOs working with Gypsies in Bulgaria that I interviewed have been recipients of Phare related funding, however the extent to which

---

[7] This idea that the answer to the 'Gypsy problem' lies with their integration was demonstrated in a national debating competition held in Bulgaria for university undergraduates (28-30 November 1997) aimed at promoting civil society. One of the titles offered read: "The greatest obstacle to the integration of Roma into Bulgarian society is the attitude of the Roma themselves." The wording and pitch of this statement discriminated against Gypsies on three levels; first, it took as it starting point the presumption that Gypsies were not integrated, second, it assumed that the integration of Gypsies into Bulgarian society was what both they and Bulgarians wanted, and third, that it was Gypsies alone who were ultimately responsible for integration.

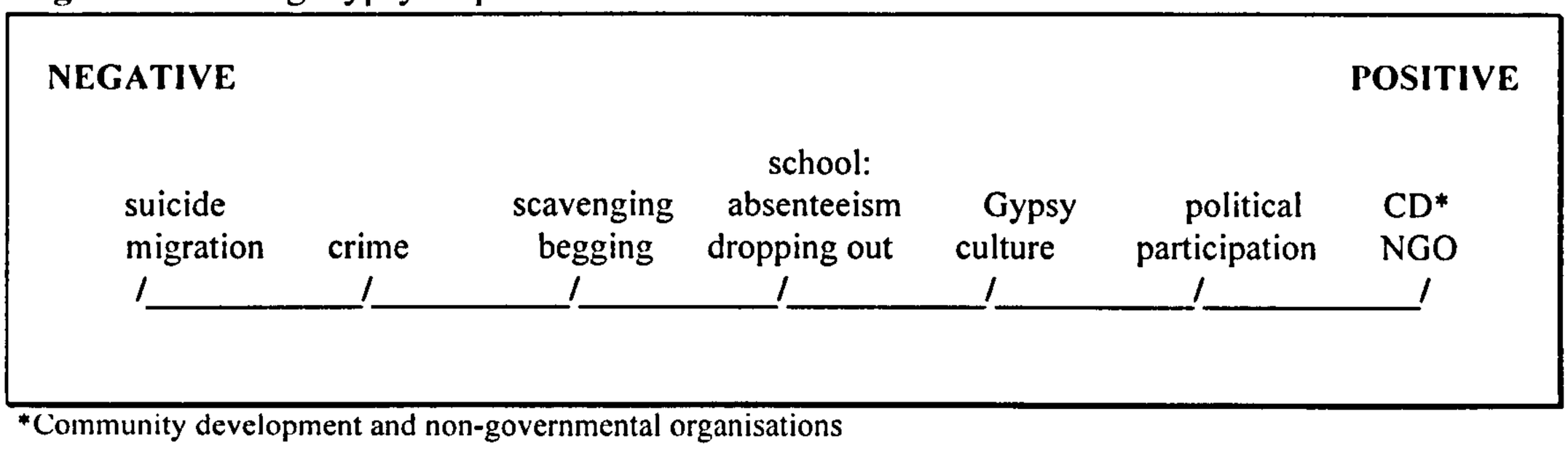
[8] Danbakli, *op. cit.*

this reflects a structured and in-depth knowledge on the part of the donors is questionable. Perhaps, as Fine argues, Gypsies have simply become the new 'buzzword',

> *By now [...] almost everyone in ECE knows that projects structured round the needs of Roma, or containing elaborate plans for reeducation containing the catchwords "civil society", or "rights", or "democracy" will receive funding.*[9]

However, there is more to it than just being a simple case of complying with popular catchwords. For, with funding comes an attached set of expectations, based on a series of assumptions. In designing projects, NGO leaders have to certify that they will ensure some contribution to civil society and the process of democratisation. In this way, the actions of Gypsies are judged and interpreted through an explicit liberal filter. By validating formal NGO responses informal responses of day to day survival are distanced further from what is defined as 'acceptable' behaviour.

Figure 7.1 Seeing Gypsy responses as a continuum



*Community development and non-governmental organisations

The liberal approach tends to see Gypsy responses during the transition on a continuum. Figure 7.1 shows how, according to this perspective, there is a 'progression' from 'backward' (negative) behaviour to democratic (positive) action: the more Gypsies get involved in the non-profit sector, become more integrated and make use of their rights, the closer they get to 'our' way of doing things. Thus, as Sinead ni Shuinéar writes in a

[9] Keith Sapsin Fine, "Fragile Stability and Change." In Abraham and Antonia Hundler, C. Hayes (eds.), *Preventing Conflict in the Post-Communist World*, Washington Brookings Institute, Washington D.C., 1996

similar discussion on relations between Gadjos and Gypsies in Ireland, "[giving] 'us' a feeling of satisfaction, since this just proves that we were right all along."[10]

A revealing comment made by John Penny who is responsible for democracy projects in Eastern Europe, inadvertently suggests the 'Western agenda': "NGOs are now seen as partners, but it will take time for the structures and institutional mechanisms to be put into place to handle this relationship. [...] There is a different situation in each country, but on the whole, *they are all moving our way.*"[11] The implication, of course, is that the overall aim on the part of Western led democratic projects is to see the development of NGOs within the Western model, whatever that may be.

Within this implicit 'Western agenda' there are many different actors as discussed in chapter 6. Soros' Open Society for example is often heralded as more progressive than most in its approach. Its underlying premise of equating civil society (the liberal ideal) with 'the development of non-profit organisations, the social integration of minority groups and the protection of minority rights', however, is no different from programmes run by Phare which see NGOs as at once saviours of civil society and mechanisms for meeting the needs of the most impoverished,

> *By stimulating the NGO sector the aim is to reinforce the foundations of civil society and encourage civilian initiatives, promote democratic values, tolerance and mutual assistance and step up aid to the poorest sectors of the population.*[12]

---

[10] Sinead ni Shuinéar, "Why Do Gaujos Hate Gypsies So Much, Anyway? A Case study." In Thomas Acton (ed.), *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity*, University of Hertfordshire Press, Hatfield, 1997. p. 31.

[11] (My emphasis) Colin Norman Walker (ed.), "NGOs Have a Role to Play in Building a Civil Society", *European Dialogue*, The European Commission bi-monthly magazine for Central Europe and the Baltics, March-April, No.2, 1998 <http://europa.eu.iny/en/comm/dg10/infcom/eur-dial/frameset_ backlist.html> (accessed May 1998).

[12] European Commission, *Digest of community resources available for financing the activities of NGOs and other governmental and/or decentralised bodies representing civil society in the fields of development cooperation and humanitarian aid.* VIII/207/97 EN, 1997.

Both these approaches, therefore, are typical of NGO approaches in general across Eastern Europe, and have helped shape conventional views of Gypsy responses during the transition.[13]

7.3 The liberal view of Gypsies during the transition

Both conventional wisdom and liberal theory tells us that 'negative behaviour' is not necessarily indicative of an inherently deviant Gypsy nature (in that all creatures are rational beings), but that Gypsies are 'underdeveloped' in their enforced reliance on 'deviant' activities. Beck and Paun, for example, in their study of consumption patterns of Gypsies in post-1989 Romania argue that their preference for a nomadic existence, "restricts educational and occupational possibilities, further marginalises and impoverishes Gypsies, and makes deviant behaviour more necessary for survival as well as more likely as an outlet for frustrations." They go on to claim rather dramatically that, "Gypsies flaunt their differences, cling tenaciously to their ethnic identity and castigate the non-Gypsy oppressor as gadjo."[14] From this premise they argue that, Gypsies have dehumanised the dominant culture, for example, seeing it as polluting, in order to preserve their own dignity. The implication of such an argument of course is that it is ultimately Gypsies, in the pursuit of their own lifestyle, who fundamentally deviate and so exclude themselves from the rest of society, or 'the norm'.[15] Elena Zamfir, Vasile Buttea and Catalin Zamfir, also in reference to Romania, implicitly reinforce this idea,

> *The traditional occupations of gypsies [sic], which have survived to an important extent, are in themselves a factor leading to marginalisation. On the one hand, many of them have the distinctive signs of the ethnic groups and are socially stigmatised: on the other hand,*

---

[13] Open Society Foundation, *Programs '97*, OSF Press, Sofia, 1997.

[14] Russell W. Beck and Magda Paun, "Ethnicity and Consumption in Romania." In Janeen A. Costa and Gary J. Barmossy (eds.), *Marketing in a Multicultural World*, Sage Publications, London/New Dheli, 1995. p. 200.

[15] Ideas of deviancy and 'self-exclusion' have in some cases become internalised within Gypsy communities, as evident in the sentiments expressed by some Gypsy leaders (observed through discussions on the world-wide email discussion group, Romnet). Compelled to counteract harmful Gypsy stereotypes, certain leaders have been keen to deny traditional cultural devices of Gypsies. 'Anti-social' features associated with Gypsies are seen as having to undergo change in order to adapt to the acceptable criteria of wider society.

> *most of them offer only minimal earning possibilities, leading to a rather poor standard of living...*[16]

This ambivalent treatment of Gypsies is equally evident in Bulgaria. A little more sensitive to the complexities of Gypsy traditions, Naoumova argues that ethnic and cultural differences should be accounted for in the development of post-1989 Bulgarian family law in terms of attitudes towards family issues such as marriage, divorce, adoption, alimony and property relations.[17] This promising start, however, soon gives way to the reproduction of stereotypes, where Gypsies are the only ethnic group who are subject to a classification that includes 'dependency' and 'deviancy':

> *1. those that have employment and are not engaged in any criminal activities;*
> *2. those who are seeking employment but are unable to get it;*
> *3. those dependent upon social assistance;*
> *4. persons engaged in the deviant activities who are divided into two groups: 'dzhebchite' (i.e. pickpockets) and 'mafiotite' (i.e. Mafia people), who enriched themselves in the last few years thanks to the development of the numerous new structures of organised heavy crime.*[18]

However "progressive" these studies may claim to be, the assumption is the same: Gypsies themselves are at least partly to blame for their disproportionate suffering of material and physical hardship. The causes of inequalities for Gypsies have been distorted in other ways too. During an interview with *Transitions* in 1998, for example, Nicolae Gheorghe highlights the dangers of defining problems for Gypsies as primarily 'social' ones,

> *When we complain about discrimination against Roma and poverty and unemployment being a result of past and present discrimination, the governments answer with the so-called social problem approach: there is poverty because Roma are not educated*

---

[16] Quoted in OECD, Alain Reyniers, "Gypsy Populations and their Movements within Central and Eastern Europe and Towards some OECD Countries", *International Migration and Labour Market Policies - Occasional Papers*, No. 1, OECD/GD(95)20, Paris, 1995. p. 8.

[17] Stefka Naoumova, "Ethnicity and Family: The Context of Family Law in Bulgaria." In J. Kurczewski and M. Maclean (eds.) *Family Law and Family Policy in the New Europe*, The Onati International Institute for the Sociology of Law, Dartmouth, 1997.

[18] *Ibid.* p. 78. 300 people were interviewed: 109 Christian Bulgarians; 97 Turks; 50 Gypsies; and 44 Pomaks.

> *[because] they are not skilled, and so on. As long as they formulate policy in such terms there will be no solution.*[19]

For some, the disadvantaged situation of Gypsies is a product of modernisation, where in line with technological development traditional sources of income for Gypsies have become defunct. This, it is argued, is further undermined by an inadequate supply of valid alternatives. Together with the long term decline of traditional resources, their 'backwardness' has led to them having no other choice but to practice in ways of making a living that contradict accepted norms. This informs such attitudes as expressed by Professor Ilya Konev, a Member of Parliament and the former Bulgarian Minister for Higher Education. He argues that it is a case of Gypsies having to simply 'catch up' with their Bulgarian counterparts: "Children should not be segregated at an early age. It is my opinion that Gypsy and Bulgarian children should go to school together. Then the Gypsy children will pick up good habits from the Bulgarians."[20] Ilona Tomova, a self-proclaimed champion of the 'Roma cause' and former Bulgarian Presidential advisor on minority issues displays a similar attitude in her study of Gypsies during the transition,

> *At the moment, hard pressed by the crisis and poverty, a mentality is being formed among the Roma which can be summarised in the following typical strategies-to look for any kind of work which provides some kind of income - if no such work can be found, to resort without any particular qualms to income generating activities which are deviant in the context of society as a whole, but 'normal' in this particular environment (theft, begging, concealing income etc.).*[21]

Her argument begins with an acknowledgement of the problems for Gypsies brought about by the economic crisis, but takes a significant turn when she describes how they, as in the above quotation, "resort without any particular qualms to income generating activities which are deviant." It is this precise terminology that serves to fix Gypsy

---

[19] Jeremy Druker, "Romani Rights" in *Transitions*, 6 (1), January, 1999. pp. 14-15.

[20] Quoted in Zang, *op. cit.* p. 33.

[21] Ilona Tomova, *The Gypsies in the Transition Period*, International Centre for Minority Studies and Inter Cultural Relations, Sofia, 1995. p. 74.

responses as inevitable, but negative in such circumstances. Her assumption is that everyone has the same potential given the right circumstances, i.e. when certain rights such as schooling or work are restricted for certain groups and individuals they are forced to act in ways that are 'deviant', but justifiably so. The argument assumes that the answer lies in making these institutions equally available to all (or imposing them by making them obligatory). But assuming that everyone could start from a level playing field and taking it for granted that social institutions are neutral, fails to address the real causes of underlying economic and social inequalities inherent in both the transition and the society in which it is taking place.

Liégeois in his analysis of the didactic nature of Gadjo-Gypsy relations reveals the danger of this kind of interpretation. In his discussion on the relations between governments and Gypsies, he argues,

> *legislation compels [Gypsies] to live in instability, then he is branded as unstable; it compels him to live in an unbalanced state; then he is qualified as unbalanced. His dynamic strategies of adaptation in the political and economic spheres lose their value in the image and are considered artificial, or superficial.*[22]

The liberal belief in the superiority of the settled over the nomadic, has invested itinerant work patterns with a negative connotation, not least of which has been its apparent criminal element. Lucassen identifies various reasons for the association of an 'alleged innate criminal behaviour' with 'the wandering poor', which he tracks through Western historiography.[23] In particular he notes how some historians in the West have defined Travellers, including Gypsies as a 'disease of the national community' whose behaviour is explained mainly in biological terms.[24] A distinction is drawn between sedentary and

---

[22] Jean-Pierre Liégeois, "Governments and Gypsies: From Rejection to Assimilation." In A. Rao (ed.), *The Other Nomads*, Böhlau Verlay, Germany, 1987. p. 370.

[23] Leo Lucassen, "A Blind Spot: Migratory and Travelling Groups in Western European Historiography", *International Review of Social History*, 38, 1993.

[24] This was according to Hermann Arnold as quoted by Lucassen, *ibid.* p. 212.

nomadic populations, the latter of which are seen as unproductive, primitive and criminal: "Just as nomadic hunters and gatherers they only 'find' things and produce nothing, thus remaining on the lowest level of human civilisation."[25]

Crime itself when committed by a Gypsy is also then 'ethnicised' into 'Gypsy crime', which has been the case not only in the West but throughout Europe including Bulgaria. This has meant that Gypsy leaders within the Bulgarian NGO sector were very cautious about promoting only certain aspects of Gypsy survival, for fear of reproducing negative stereotypes. Just as the association of the NGO sector with civil society compels those within it to collude with its norms for fear of confirming the stereotype that they are backward and uncivilised, so too are they keen to disassociate themselves from other stereotypes, such as criminality. During my interviews with Gypsy NGO leaders, Gypsy stereotypes were often frowned upon and dismissed, and many were reluctant to acknowledge that 'anti-social' survival strategies were a reality for most Gypsies, as they were were for many citizens in Bulgaria. The denial of certain aspects was seen by most Gypsy leaders as a necessary public stance to take, if they were to gain credibility among their peers and donors.

Whether it be in terms of 'deviancy', such as crime, or in terms of 'progress', such as with the NGO sector, the liberal view of Gypsy behaviour fails to fully appreciate the complex dialectical relationship between the oppressed and the oppressors, which shapes the behaviour patterns associated with Gypsies. The active participation of Gypsies within the NGO sector does not necessarily represent a victory for Gypsies as a whole nor a sell-out. Instead, it represents a space within which many 'Romani patriots' can be at once 'Romani', 'Bulgarian' and even 'aspiring Western'. This 'playing with' identities, is

[25] Lucassen, *op. cit.*

one that permeates both everyday life and life within the world of NGOs. By unravelling Gypsy stereotypes and looking at features of their everyday survival from a bottom-up perspective, it is possible to reveal the difficulties that arise when attempts are made to departmentalise Gypsy behaviour into one of either outright resistance or total compliance. Although, these are both realities, the various shades that exist in between these are far more common and can be detected within the activities of Gypsy foundations.

7.4 Interpretations 'from below'.

In order to contextualise my discussion on the dialectic between resistance and compliance within the NGO sector on the part of Gypsies, I refer back to the question raised in section 7 of Chapter 2, of to what extent we can interpret the everyday survival strategies of oppressed groups as resistance at a more general level. As identified, the emerging trend in the 1960s and 1970s of examining 'history from below' opened up possibilities for a more sympathetic approach towards oppressed groups in the analysis of their contribution to social structures and processes.[26] By re-focusing the discussion onto the oppressed, rather than the oppressors, scholars concerned with 'reclaiming the subject' hoped to reveal some of the fundamental problems attached to liberal claims that we as citizens have equal stakes in society's structures and its shared culture.

For some, this has led to the task of 'reclaiming', or 'recuperating' the oppressed group as a 'conscious human subject-agent'.[27] This however, led to a whole series of problems. In the search for the authentic 'history of the people', i.e. that which had not been imposed by an ethnocentric historiography, scholars were confronted with "an area of darkness

---

[26] Alex Callinicos, "Marxism and the Crisis in Social History." In John Rees (ed.), *Essays on Historical Materialism*, Bookmarks, London, 1998.

[27] See for example Rosalind O'Nanlon, "Recovering the Subject in Subaltern Studies and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia", *Modern Asia Studies*, 22 (1), 1988.

which the dominant modes of historical discourse have failed to penetrate", that is, an area which, by definition, is closed off from them.[28] This has been the essence of most attacks waged against the history 'from below' approach. The contradictions and problems within this 'new' approach is encapsulated in the journal *Subaltern Studies*, established in India in 1982. Its original premise was to directly challenge the top-down view of the anti-colonial struggle as put forward by both nationalist and Communist historians. However, in so doing it has increasingly leaned towards post-modern tendencies. Gyanendra Pandey, a leading member of the *Subaltern Studies* group, in her 'defence of the fragment' illustrates this well,

> *What the historians call a 'fragment' - a weaver's diary, a collection of poems by an unknown poet (and to those we might add all those literatures of India that Macauley condemned, creation myths and women's songs, family genealogies and local traditions) - is of central importance in challenging the state's construction of history, in making other histories and marking those contested spaces through which particular unities are sought to be constituted and others broken up.*[29]

This shift in direction marked a departure from a structural analysis of inequality to one that considered only the possibilities of subjective realities. In the words of Patrick Joyce, a leading post-modernist, "it is very difficult to conceive of a structure of social relationships, or a structure of any 'social variables (occupations, incomes etc.) as lying objectively outside the agent or the observer".[30] Indeed, in *Democratic Subjects,* Joyce explicitly argues that society, poverty and so on are determined by language, culture and imagination, not by experience.[31] The implications of such an argument is that the subordination of a given group is only a subjective reality; that is, people are not really poor, they only think they are.

---

[28] O'Nanlon, *op. cit.* p. 195.

[29] Gyanendra Pandey "In Defence of the Fragment", *Economic and Political Weekly,* 26 (11-12), 1991. Quoted in Callinicos, *op. cit.* pp. 32-33.

[30] Patrick Joyce, "The End Of Social History?", *Social History*, 20, 1995, quoted in Chris Harman, "History, Myth and Marxism", in Rees, *op. cit.* pp. 17-18.

[31] Cited in Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History,* Granta Books, London, 1997. p. 277.

In contrast to the post-modern approach has been the work of those who do not fall into the trap of dissolving power of all agency. As discussed in section 7 of Chapter 2, James C. Scott is an important scholar in this respect. His work has been concerned with the idea that the ideological superstructure of class society is one reproduced through a power struggle between the dominators and the subordinated acted out through an interplay of public and hidden discourses. He defines the hidden transcript as 'a host of practices devised to exercise [..] rights in clandestine ways', acted out by the oppressed and shielded by their public transcript of compliance.[32] "The practice of domination", he argues, "*creates* the hidden transcript" whereby both transcripts come to represent realms of power and interest.[33] Labelled as the "infrapolitics of the powerless", Scott injects the discourse of a hidden transcript with subversive tools for ideological resistance.[34]

In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, Scott extends his original emphasis on two transcripts to encompass four, where a public and hidden transcript can be found in both the everyday existence of the dominant and the subordinate,

> *Every subordinate group creates, out of its ordeal, a "hidden transcript" that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant. The powerful, for their part, also develop a hidden transcript representing the practices and claims of their rule that cannot be openly avowed.*[35]

He goes on to argue that, "virtually all ordinarily observed relations between dominant and subordinate represent the encounter of the public transcript of the dominant with the public transcript of the subordinate", i.e. it is the public transcript by which these groups communicate and judge each other, yet the hidden transcript where the 'real' action takes

---

[32] Scott, *op. cit.* 1985. p. 189.
[33] *Ibid.* p. 27.
[34] *Ibid.* p. 183.
[35] Scott, *op. cit.* 1990. p. xii.

place.[36] This added dimension rests on the conviction that the oppressed have not entirely succumbed to the hegemonic strategies of dominant society. It also implies that the dominant are equally clear about how and why they take on the role of oppressors. In the words of Yee, "In short: conformity is calculated, not unthinking, and beneath the surface of symbolic and ritual compliance there is an undercurrent of ideological resistance."[37]

Scott's clear conceptions of historical agency and power relationships puts his work in most explicit opposition to the arguments of those theorists who have tried to dissolve these concepts. His explanation of a 'hidden transcript' has therefore been attacked most sharply by scholars from the post-modernist camp.[38] They see the 'hidden transcript' as an 'invention', which rests on a search for authenticity and so some kind of objective truth, which, for them is nothing more than a fruitless search for a chimera. The idea of a hidden transcript, however, does have real empirical meaning if we acknowledge its place within the framework of society's structures. For example, it is possible to observe in real terms the defensive reaction that this hidden transcript incurs on the part of dominant society, where, in the words of Scott, "by virtue of [the peasants'] institutional invisibility, activities on anything less than a massive scale are, if they are noticed at all, rarely accorded any social significance."[39] The systematic dismissal of resistance as irrational, or at best irrelevant, coupled with attempts to control or abolish potential sites of resistance indicates that there is a sense of threat felt by those within positions of power.

---

[36] Scott, *op. cit.*, 1990. p. 13.

[37] Danny Yee, *A Book Review: Weapons of the Weak Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, 1994, web site <http://www.anatomy.usyd.edu.au/danny/book-reviews/h/weapons_of_the_weak.html> (accessed June 1997).

[38] See for example, Timothy Mitchell, "Everyday Metophors of Power", *Theory and Society*, 19, 1990.

[39] Scott, *op. cit.*, 1985. p. 35.

Even with Scott, however, there are certain problems. First he can be seen to be part of the post-Vietnam tradition in the USA of 'peasant studies', which, influenced by Marxist studies in Europe at that time, tended to 'romanticise' peasants. Second, in his restoration of peasants as social historical agents, he has had to rely on finding evidence of hidden (or undeclared) resistance, the very nature of which, he acknowledges, is that it is disguised and lies behind the screen of formal activity. But, Scott's point is that "the discourse of the hidden transcript does not merely shed light on behaviour or explain it; it helps constitute the behaviour."[40] Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Scott's emphasis on the rationality of hidden forms of resistance evades important questions of 'false consciousness', as pointed out by White, who in her discussion on peasants and resistance in Vietnam argues that,

> *the tricks of adding stones, straw, etc. to increase the weight of the landlord or the tax collector's share of the harvest can perhaps give peasants the illusion of having more power and manoeuvrability than is actually the case - that is, these ineffective but psychologically satisfying forms of resistance could in fact contribute to false consciousness, blinding people to the painful reality of the extent of their powerlessness and exploitation.*[41]

This is indeed a valid point to consider. However, rather than using it to dismiss resistance altogether, the possibility that resistance can incorporate elements of 'false consciousness' highlights the need to be more careful in how we choose to define it. Scott, by rejecting the usual emphasis on false consciousness and hegemony, stresses the role that material circumstances play in limiting opportunities for conventional resistance. This emphasis on material circumstances, according to Scott, leaves the oppressed groups with a relatively clear understanding of the source and nature of their oppression.[42] In this way Scott's argument offers an alternative means for exploring in

---

[40] Scott, *op. cit.*, 1990. p. 188.

[41] Christine Pelzer White, "Everyday Resistance, Socialist Revolution and Rural Development: The Vietnamese Case", *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 13 (2), 1986. p. 56.

[42] The focus for many Scott critics has been the implications of his argument for the meanings of individual and collective action. See for example: Charles Tilly, "Domination, Resistance, Compliance...Discourse", *Sociological*

more depth Gypsy responses, that, otherwise, are taken only as evidence that Gypsies, using Foucault's terminology, are the 'principle' of their own 'subjection'.[43]

In adopting Scott's thesis as the conceptual framework for this analysis, it is vital to note obvious differences as well as similarities that exist between his analysis of peasants in Malaysia and my analysis of Gypsies in Bulgaria. In general terms, peasants are defined as such by their specific function within the structure of work relations, whereas Gypsies are traditionally seen as standing outside of wage-labour settings. However, Gypsies world-wide have increasingly become integrated into the wage-labour structure, and in Bulgaria this was certainly the case under Communism. For the purpose of this study, what is perhaps most important, is that, like the peasants in his study, a tension between the public and hidden transcripts exists for Gypsies in Bulgaria, which, within the NGO sector they have been able to manipulate as central to their survival strategies.

7.5 Gypsy survival as resistance

With the dismantling of Soviet style regimes, formal policies of aggressive assimilation for Gypsies have become distinctively less explicit. Clouded in the rhetoric of democratisation, integration and civil society, measures of assimilation are now embodied in new programmes for an integrated education, but also in the very workings of the NGO sector itself. This new 'democratic' environment has made it increasingly difficult for Gypsies to articulate any formal resistance to emerging institutions without fear of reproach. If Gypsies do not at least give the impression of conforming to ideals of

---

Forum, 6 (3), 1991, which addresses the implications of Scott's work for the role of ethnography in discerning resistance to cultural hegemony; Susan Gal "Language and the 'Arts of Resistance' - Review Essay", *Cultural Anthropology*, 10 (3), 1995, which addresses the need for an understanding of the role of peasants in rural development; and White, *op. cit.*

[43] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1975, quoted by Mitchell, *ibid.* Although for many scholars, Foucault's work represents a fruitful line of enquiry, in the particular context of this discussion I find that ultimately it is a nullifying argument. In refusing to acknowledge the structural and institutional elements to oppression, the idea that we are the principle of our own subjection, renders at once everyone and no-one responsible.

civil society or integration they run the risk of being labelled as uncivil and anti-democratic. It is therefore fundamental to our understanding of Gypsies in Bulgaria and their responses to the transition that we re-examine their behaviour and observe that in many ways their responses are political not only by virtue of their subordinated position but importantly by their struggle to live their own way.

As discussed in section 2 above, the responses of Gypsies during the transition can be interpreted as lying on a continuum from 'negative' responses of migration and crime to more 'acceptable' responses of promoting their own culture and/or participating in the NGO sector. However, if we take resistance to refer to the different ways in which subordinated groups, and in this case Gypsies, do not conform to or actively counteract the 'norms' imposed on them by wider (or Gadjo) society (through such institutions as formal schooling, wage labour, or small family units), it is possible to identify resistance to varying degrees in all of these response types. The idea that Gypsies must resist Gadjo attempts at their assimilation, if they are to ensure their own cultural survival, is certainly not a controversial one.[44] The idea that resistance is inscribed into everyday activities of Gypsies, however, is more problematic. Perhaps, a more useful approach would be to recognise the context in which Gypsy survival strategies operate. Thus it could be argued that programmes of assimilation, in whatever form, aimed at the disappearance of Gypsies have over time shaped a context in which survival strategies are transformed into resistance strategies.

Gypsies face a very specific form of oppression that many see as all-pervasive. Liégeois, for example, writes that, "Between exclusion and assimilation, through confinement and integration, there is no middle course. The Gypsy problem has always brought solutions

[44] K. W. Lee and W.G. Warren, "Alternative Education: Lessons from Gypsy Thought and Practice", *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 39, (3), 1991. p. 315.

which are synonymous with the Gypsies' disappearance."[45] Although Gypsies are subject to systematic attempts at their 'disappearance', they continue to survive within the structures of Gadjo society. The resources for this survival, however, depend on Gadjo society and therefore on their goodwill. In the words of Stewart, this has led to Gypsies being "caught in a endless oscillation between [the] two visions of their world", i.e. between living with the Gadjos or separately among the Gypsies.[46]

To balance this contradiction of Gypsy survival and collusion with Gadjo society has required the avoidance of open conflict on the part of Gypsies themselves. Indeed, Scott argues that the very nature of everyday resistance is that it is backstage, there are no public demonstrations or riots, rendering it almost invisible. For him the lack of any collective public facade however does not remove the intention to resist or as the dictionary definition specifies "to withstand or counteract the force or effect of oppression."[47] In this sense it could be argued that the goal of Gypsy survival, as with most oppressed groups, is not to overthrow the system but to survive within it or, as Hobsbawm writes in reference to peasants, "working the system to their minimum disadvantage."[48] This perhaps, is where ideas of *hidden* resistance play a part in unravelling the more subtle elements of Gypsy survival. Using Scott's terminology, their various cultural networks could be seen as having provided one of the ways through which a 'hidden transcript' can be exercised.

An ancient story belonging to a particular group of Gypsies in Bulgaria which has, through generations, been passed on orally and recorded in a book edited by

---

[45] Liégeois, *op. cit.* p. 370.

[46] Michael Stewart, *Brothers in Song. The Persistence of (Vlach) Gypsy Identity and Community in Socialist Hungary*, PhD Thesis, London School of Economics, London, 1987, quoted by Andrzej Mirga, "Roma Territorial Behaviour and State Policy: The Case of the Socialist Countries of East Europe." In Michael J. Casimir (ed.), *Mobility and Territoriality*, Aparno Rao, Berg. New York/ Oxford, 1992. p. 264.

[47] Scott, *op. cit.*, 1985, p. 289.

[48] Eric Hobsbawm,"Peasants and Politics", *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 1 (1), 1973. p. 7.

Marushiakova and Popov gives us a flavour of the Gypsy attitude in Bulgaria to Gadjo society and the ambiguous relationship that exists between them.[49] It explains how a Gypsy in response to a Gadjo's 'stinginess' reacted in a deliberately anti-social way in order to retrieve money which was rightfully his. Rather than directly confronting and attacking the Gadjo he scared off the Gadjo so leaving the money behind for the Gypsy to take. This story shows one of the ways in which Gypsies are willing to take on non-Gypsy stereotypes by creating stories and legends around them. This 'rhetorical' celebration of 'economic cunning' is important in the 'moral elevation' of their survival strategies whether it be in terms of portraying their methods of trading as light work or in terms of showing off about how they benefit from the Gadjo even in those cases when it is not true.[50]

Silverman in her extensive fieldwork carried out with Gypsies in Bulgaria between 1972-1995 explored various aspects of cultural resistance on the part of Gypsy communities and in particular women.[51] Although Gypsies to varying degrees have maintained such devices as music, language, dress and occupation, both under Communism and since its collapse, problems soon arise when attempts are made to fit them into civil society theory. The nature of this kind of resistance is that it operates outside the legal framework and away from the public eye. Her study of music performance among Gypsies in Bulgaria and Macedonia suggests a clear support for ideas of resistance.

---

[49] Elena Marushiakova and Vesslin Popov, *Studii Romani Vol. I and II*, Club '90 Publishers, Sofia, 1994/5. See Appendix 4 for full version.

[50] Stewart tells of how a fellow anthropologist asked Stewart's host, an old Gypsy woman, how Gypsies lived. She replied through cunning and trickery and implied that theft was Gypsy work. Stewart, however, knew that this was not really the case and that most of the inhabitants of this settlement were not 'predators on the undeserving wealthy' but were semi-skilled workers in the local factory. Michael Stewart, *The Time of the Gypsies*, Westview Press, Oxford, 1997. pp. 7-19. See also, Michael Stewart, "The Puzzle of Roma Persistence: Group Identity Without a Nation." In T. Acton and G. Mundy (eds.), *Romani Culture and Gypsy Identity*, University of Hertfordshire Press, Hatfield, 1997.

[51] Carol Silverman, "State, Market and Gender Relations among Bulgarian Roma 1970-90", *East European Anthropology Group*, Autumn, 14 (2), 1996.

Traditionally she notes that music has been an important political force for subversive and formal processes in the Balkans, whether it be for celebrating ethnic identities or for promoting national identities. Music has been especially significant for Gypsy cultural survival. From the 1970s in Bulgaria only Bulgarian music was permitted to which all ethnic groups had to comply. Unofficially however, Gypsy music thrived. In Communist Bulgaria wedding music was a viable niche in the second economy, especially for Gypsies, which with its, "daring speed and technique, rock and jazz influences",was, and still is, associated with newness and openness. The implications therefore are far reaching and indicative of the kind of influence Gypsies had, and continue to have, through their unofficial cultural practices. Whereas the constraining ideology before 1989 was that of State-Communism, since 1989, Gypsies must now operate within the constraints of a market economy. In this new situation, wedding music has continued to prove a vital source of income for many Gypsy families. Songs in the Romany language, however, are also important in that Bulgarian Gypsies can immediately identify with them, which is especially important given the hitherto suppression of Gypsy music.[52]

Although Gypsy music provides a very specific example of what Silverman refers to as 'mobilisation and resistance' for Gypsies, it does also point towards more general features of Gypsy culture as a form of survival. Barany, for example, has observed that,

> *In Eastern Europe and elsewhere, the Roma have been surrounded by a hostile social environment which has compelled them to follow strategies, such as 'pretending' assimilation by conforming to the dominant groups' demands, assuming lifestyles and customs alien to them, even denying their ethnic identity in censuses, etc., while conserving their culture and traditions.*[53]

---

[52] Carol Silverman, "Music and Marginality: Roma (Gypsies) of Bulgaria and Macedonia", in Mark Slobin (ed.) *Retuning Culture - Musical Changes in Central and Eastern Europe*, Duke University Press, Durham/London, 1996b. pp. 239-242.

[53] Zoltan Barany "Living on the edge: The East European Roma in Post Communist Politics and Societies", *Slavic Review*,53 (2), 1994. p. 323.

He too draws on the importance of Gypsy culture in resisting assimilation in terms of: "antagonistic attitudes towards non-Roma, close ties within the Romani community, adherence to traditions, values and customs, etc." [54] In particular, Barany takes the resurgence of Romani nationalism in Eastern Europe as an explicit manifestation of their resistance, especially since 1989. Therefore, one of the main ways in which Gypsies have survived within a world antithetical to Gypsy values has been through the active preservation of their language, customs and beliefs. In a similar vain to Barth's idea of 'boundary maintenance', Gypsies can be argued to have taken on various survival strategies (stricter for some groups than for others) that implicitly involve some kind of resistance to assimilation, whether it be through endogamous marriages, the belief that the Gadjo world is unclean, or the continued use of the Romany language and its various dialects.

As well as resistance through proactive measures of cultural survival, their indirect influence on wider culture, coupled with their own constantly changing culture, have also enabled them to resist external attempts at their disappearance. The important role of Gypsy culture in their own survival is a subject Popov deals with in terms of both its fusion into traditional Bulgarian culture and its self-modifying form.[55] He explores traces of Gypsy cultural influence within the more conservative elements of traditional Bulgarian culture. In Bulgarian beliefs, superstitions, festivals, rituals and folklore, Popov observes the appearance and imposition of the 'Gypsy' figure. Although often used to denote supernatural and essentially negative features such as the plague, their appearance does indicate a specific role for Gypsies in Bulgarian society. Most

---

[54] Zoltan Barany, "Protracted Marginality: The East European Roma." In Sam C. Nolutshungu (ed.), *Margins of Insecurity - Minorities and International Security*, University of Rochester Press, New York/Suffolk, 1996. p. 86.
[55] Vesslin Popov, "The Gypsies and Traditional Bulgarian Culture", *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Series 5, 3 (1), 1993.

significantly, the fusion of Gypsy and Bulgarian folklore reveals the common heritage of many customs practised by both Gypsies and Bulgarians.[56]

In terms of explaining the survival of the overall Gypsy ethnocultural system, Popov, following Lévi-Strauss's terminology, defines it as a 'hot' culture in order to express its innovative and constantly changing character.[57] Although he gives various examples of certain Gypsy rituals and customs which have been abandoned or forgotten, he also notes the importance of the flexibility of Gypsy culture, for example with religion:

> *The Gypsies rapidly replace one religion with another [...] Once adopted, the new religion can become a characteristic of the respective group, at least in the conditions of the Balkan peninsular [...] Their spiritual life [...] represents a syncretic formation on a grand scale, which includes elements of different religions and cultures which would otherwise be in total opposition and this is reflected correspondingly in the feats, rituals and customs of the Gypsies.*[58]

The persistence of Gypsy communities as rooted in their inherently flexible form is also evident in terms of the fact that in Bulgaria there are no formal Gypsy leadership positions at a national level to which all Gypsies aspire. Nor indeed are there legal households for state officials to get their hands on. Most Gypsies are scattered throughout rural villages and even those found in clearly defined huge ghettos on the outskirts of cities and towns form numerous smaller groups within them.[59] Although the degree of movement for Gypsies in Bulgaria is practically very low, keeping a low

---

[56] Popov gives the example of the celebration of 'St. Athanasius' Day by Gypsies in Vidin. A ritual is still performed by Gypsies there for 'the exit of the plague'. In Bulgarian folk culture, this day is also important and tied directly to the beliefs of the plague. *op. cit.* p. 29.

[57] Lévi-Strauss distinguishes between 'hot' and 'cold' culture types, where the former is used to denote all those cultures which transform over time and the latter all archaic types of cultures. Popov therefore sees Bulgarian cultures as a 'cold' analogy and Gypsy cultures as a 'hot' analogy of Levi-Strauss's model.

[58] Popov, *op. cit.* p27.

[59] Stewart also draws on their lack of formal cultural institutions in his study of Rom in Hungary. He notes that there is no 'objectivised' communal life, i.e. no religious or secular leadership or other institutionalised forms. Instead, it was (and still is) interaction at the family level that bound the community together which meant that under Communism there was 'nothing there' (not even households in the conventional sense) for the state 'to get their hands on'. Stewart, *The Time of the Gypsies*, *op. cit.*. p. 72. Lee and Warren in the British context also draw on this idea of how the way in which Gypsy settlements are small and scattered enables them " [to avoid] direct confrontations with authority, preferring evasion, [and] movement." Lee and Warren, *op. cit.* p. 315.

public profile has been central to their cultural survival and has been one of the ways in which they have been able to resist total cultural assimilation.

The identification of their culture as a site for resistance is particularly significant given that the celebration of Gypsy cultures is viewed as a relatively positive response on the part of Gypsies to the new democratic freedoms of post-Communism. Their responses to formal education, however, such as high absenteeism and drop-out rates, have not been welcomed so gladly. This has been evident partly in the overt strategy on the part both of governmental and non-governmental organisations to find ways to encourage their participation in formal education despite obvious inequalities in the existing structure. It also has been evident in the distinct lack of any discussion at the formal as well as informal level on the intrinsic value of such a response for securing their own economic as well as cultural survival.

7.6 Resistance to formal education

The spectrum of Gypsy responses as set out in section 7.2 shows how the clash between Gypsy forms of education and Gadjo schooling in Bulgaria is one example of the way in which Gypsies' resilience to assimilation is interpreted by Gadjos as an obstacle to their own well-being. This fails ultimately to acknowledge that the experience of schooling for Gypsies is quite different to that of their Bulgarian counterparts. As well as having to confront direct discrimination in the classroom, Gypsies are not supported academically and in many cases actively discouraged from learning. That schooling is a difficult and often painful experience for Gypsies in Bulgaria was a point raised time and time again during a seminar on education consisting of both Gypsy and Gadjo practitioners in the field.[60] Both Gypsy teachers and NGO leaders present argued that Gypsies were, in most

[60] The Concluding Seminar on the Project, "Self-Help Bureau", organised by CEGA, Plovdiv, Bulgaria , 25-26 September 1997.

cases, subject to an education quite different to their Bulgarian counterparts where the nurturing of vocational skills are prioritised over the acquisition of academic knowledge. Not only were these vocations often outmoded, but they sometimes posed real health risks. The emphasis on vocational education, in their view, served to exploit Gypsies and deny them access to more important areas of learning.

These 'push' factors are compounded by further external factors. Poverty and unemployment made everyday survival a priority for most Gypsy families. The need to find work and provide basic needs created a set of objectives that inevitably conflicted with the demands and expectations made on them by the schooling system. According to the National Statistical Institute for Bulgaria, between 1989-1992, 26-33,000 children dropped out of school every year (this is not including those who do not even register in the first place). Furthermore, this drop out rate increased among Gypsies as they progressed up through the school system. In mainstream schools Gypsies constituted 14.7 per cent in classes 1-3, 9.2 per cent in classes 4-8, yet only 0.9 per cent in classes 8 upwards. As already detailed in the previous chapter, it was estimated that in 1992 Gypsies constituted less than 10 per cent of pupils in mainstream education, yet for segregated schools their numbers were much higher: 32.1 per cent of pupils in auxiliary schools, 21.6 per cent of pupils in vocational schools and 29 per cent of pupils in schools for behavioural problems.[61]

High absenteeism or dropping out rates however are rarely analysed in such a way as to consider both push and pull factors. Instead they are interpreted as unintentional consequences of the 'Gypsy way of life'.[62] The problem is identified with the group

[61] Source: The Bulgarian National Statistical Institute, 1993.

[62] This attitude that Roma absenteeism is rooted in their own culture was expressed by the director of Dom Uchilishte "Sv. Sv. Kiril i Metodii", Rousse, who referred to early marriages and heavy parental demands of itinerant work as the main obstacles to their education (Interview: 10.3.97).

themselves, rather than with the social structures that impinge upon them. The implication is that the existence of inequality or of disadvantaged groups represents just an 'aberration' to a system that otherwise is fair and just. According to this argument, social inequality occurs through the inadvertent exclusion of certain groups or individuals. The solution therefore, lies in the acquisition of key skills, resources, and confidence on the part of the 'socially excluded' in order that they are better equipped to become 'included'. In the specific case of education it is with finding ways to help them overcome the problems associated with their lifestyle.

The so-called emphasis on 'social agency', through which it is ultimately the groups, or individuals in question who can bring themselves out of poverty and isolation, has reinforced the view that by *not* actively subscribing to established norms and conventional life skills, groups are deviant and are themselves the course of their own 'exclusion'. In this manner, Rossitza Ivanova, a pedagogical consultant for the Bulgarian NGO, CEGA, argues that,

> *The people [Gypsies] need help, but they also have to learn and abide to some basic rules of behaviour. Rroma [sic] children, on their part, need extra teaching to better integrate in the overall educational process [...] They are very vivid people and if coached rightly, they will integrate their resources in society, yet preserve their identity.*[63]

The preservation of their identity is almost tagged on at the end, in an attempt, perhaps, to avoid accusations of promoting 'assimilation'. Nevertheless, it does not deflect from her emphasis on 'Roma' having to 'abide to some basic rule of behaviour.' Within this outlook, education is seen by national and international policy makers, together with supporters of the 'Roma cause', as the best strategy for Gypsy integration into wider

---

[63] Quoted by Mariana Milosheva (ed.), *Moving Beyond Walls -The Stolipinovo People Taking Charge of Their Community*, CEGA, Sofia, 1997. p. 84.

society.[64] There is a school of thought, however, that regards the institution of schooling as it stands as a specific tool of assimilation, working in the interest of majority society. Okely, a proponent of this view, argues that rather than as acting as a neutral tool for bringing together different cultures, government policies directed towards Gypsies' schooling are largely aimed at incorporation and ignore existing forms of education within Gypsy cultures.

> *Gypsy children are seen as 'innocent' and 'wild' because they are deprived of the dominant society's culture. Little attention is paid to the Gypsies' own non-literate, but coherent, culture and identity. The nation-state, charities and international units such as the EU and UNESCO finance educational programmes, for overt or covert assimilation, or for the construction of exotic tradition.*[65]

It must be considered that the integration of Gypsies into mainstream schooling is often based on a disregard for other methods of learning that minority groups have themselves developed. The extended family within the Gypsy community, for example, has been a vital source of learning for children. In this respect, it is no less significant than the formal institution of school (albeit in different ways), where traditional occupational and survival skills are passed on through the family through demonstration and the active participation of the child. The reluctance on the part of funding bodies and national

---

[64] Some studies have expressed a more in-depth concern with the complex relations between Gypsies and non-Gypsy children once in school. For example, Pavel Rican in his study of the extent to which Gypsy and non-Gypsy pupils reject or accept members from the other group in the Czech Republic is keen to promote school education as "one of the most important ways to help the quickly growing Gypsy population to share the chances offered by democratic society". However, beyond the reproduction of the liberal view, he also stresses that schooling is important "to teach both Gypsy and majority children how to live together in peace, solidarity, and friendship". Pavel Rican, "Sociometric Status of Gypsy Children in Ethnically Mixed Classes", *Studia Psychologica*, 38 (3), 1996. p. 177.

[65] Judith Okely, "Non-Territorial Culture as the Rationale for the Assimilation of Gypsy Children", *Childhood - A Global Journal of Child Research*, 4 (1), 1997. p. 79. Arguing along similar lines, Gmelch's UK study of Gypsies over a decade ago draws many parallels with current attempts in Eastern Europe to include Gypsies into the schooling system. She argues that the tendency of mainstream education to 'help' and 'teach' Gypsies is essentially paternalistic and "poses a far greater threat to group identity and autonomy than mere settlement ever could." Sharon Bohn Gmelch, "Groups That Don't Want In: Gypsies and Other Artisan Trader, and Entertainer Minorities", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 15, 1986. pp. 324-5. Likewise, the argument made by Lee and Warren in their discussion on Gadjo education in the UK has many important parallels with the situation in Bulgaria, as indeed elsewhere. They argue that formal schooling is totally antithetical to "Romani values" in that their culture is orally based, it poses a threat in that formal education is 'geared towards the inculcation of new values', and that the main objective in the classroom is to separate the Gypsy from the Gadjo. Lee and Warren, *op. cit.* pp. 315-16.

policy makers to acknowledge existing methods of learning and the structural limitations to creating a 'positive vector' reveals that cultural assimilation, which lay at the heart of schooling under Communism, has yet to be tackled. Attempts at encouraging the inclusion of Gypsies into formal schooling, cloaked as it may be in the terminology of integration and equality of opportunities, are therefore futile and restrained by assimilative undercurrents.

The overwhelming solace found by policy makers in school education since 1989 seems increasingly implausible against the backdrop of a declining education system in Bulgaria as indeed across Eastern Europe: the costs to families of educating children have gone up; the quality of schooling has fallen; enrolment and attendance rates have dropped; social support provided by schools is down; selectivity and competition has grown; and many people now face unemployment on leaving.[66] Rather than encouraging increased investment, spending in this area has decreased, which in line with an already declining GDP further exacerbated the problem. In Bulgaria, public expenditures on education as a percentage of GDP declined from 5.0 per cent in 1990 to 3.5 per cent in 1996, where GDP itself declined during this period by nearly 30 per cent.[67]

The Bulgarian school system is a highly centralised one where the Ministry of Education determines basic school policies, administrative arrangements and the appointment of head teachers. There is some leeway for teachers to choose from a range of approved text books within the core subjects. However, the degree of autonomy in terms of teaching minority languages and cultures is extremely limited. Any potential redirection in minority teaching can only come from above. In 1991, for example, the Council of

[66] UNICEF, *Education for All?*, The MONEE Project CEE/CIS/Baltics, Regional Monitoring Report, No. 5, 1998. p. ix.
[67] *Ibid.* p. 114.

Ministers passed an ordinance that restored minority language education by allowing selected grades to partake in four optional classes a week. However, this was not obligatory, and therefore failed to have a significant impact at a nation-wide scale.[68]

In spite of the obvious contradictions in formal schooling the liberal assumption dictates that, as it stands, school is open to Gypsies if only they show enough commitment to 'proper' values and hard work. Attempts at encouraging Gypsies to attend school therefore have not ceased, but in fact multiplied. This encourages, rather than challenges, many existing problems within the schooling system such as: split schooling; discrimination within the classroom; absence of subjects that deal with Gypsy culture; and subsequently low attendance and success rates for Gypsy pupils. In Bulgaria, as elsewhere, teachers are often ill-prepared and head teachers are reluctant to accept Gypsy pupils in the first place. If Gypsy pupils are allowed into mainstream schooling, they often have to partake in segregated classes; if not, they are expected to slot into the new and often unfamiliar environment with as little disturbance as possible. When the case is otherwise the children are criticised and rejected. As discussed earlier this often results in teachers sending Gypsy pupils to 'special schools'. Repeated failures at mainstream schools are taken as an indication of inherent learning difficulties, rather than as indicators of structural inequality. For many therefore, enrolment in the current Bulgarian education system does not help, but often hinders Gypsy wider survival in economic, social, and cultural terms.

In spite of this, the Commission of the European Community in their document on school provision for Gypsies in Europe (1996) claims that, "education is a link to the future, a positive vector, which enables us to get out of the rut of thinking in terms of

---

[68] Minority Rights Group, *Education in Multi-ethnic Societies of Central and Eastern Europe*, MRG Workshop Report, London, 1998.

'problems' linked to an approach from a 'social' or 'marginal' angle."[69] The context of a collapsing education system, a hostile school environment and the problems inherent to the Bulgarian institution of schooling itself are seemingly ignored. But it is this very context that informs the attitudes and behaviour of Gypsies towards schooling. But how far is it then feasible to interpret behaviour such as absenteeism or dropping-out as evidence of resistance?

Scott argues in reference to his own research that the intentions of peasant resistance are inscribed in the very actions themselves. This could also be argued in the case of Gypsies in Eastern Europe. A Gypsy child who helps at home with the family rather than attend school is 'saying' that his/her need to make a living takes precedence over the formal and fruitless constrictions of school. The problem with this type of analysis, however, is how to 'prove' such a statement within the given limits of this study. Perhaps it would be more useful then, simply to recognise that there are various explanations for Gypsies not attending school, not least of which is that, as it stands, schooling does not always offer Gypsies the most direct and effective means for short and long term survival. This then enables us to go beyond the popular argument that Gypsies are simply not equipped for successful schooling, or that their ill-informed parents disallow their children to attend formal schooling. Although it is difficult to 'prove' that by not attending school Gypsies are putting up some kind of resistance, at the same time, it would be misleading and demeaning to dismiss this as a possibility.

7.7 Conclusion

The example of schooling and the response of Gypsies to it reveals the complex relationship that exists between majority institutions and minority populations. The idea

[69] Commission for the European Community, *School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children*, Brussels, COM (96) 495 final, October 1996. p. 88.

that 'excluded' groups can and do resist, whether openly or otherwise, offers scope for new insights into this relationship, which goes above and beyond the liberal social exclusion analysis. This has therefore not earned it wide appeal. Scott, in his articulation of 'hidden' resistance, has been accused of merely partaking in the use of "positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest."[70] Indeed, the exploration of resistance strategies as rational responses for oppressed groups to situations of oppression or exploitation has been taken by some to suggest that the group in question has a history of *its own*.

However, the recognition of specific historical experiences for different oppressed groups does not necessarily entail sealing off their history from that of their domination. Indeed, this distinction is largely an artificial one, in that it would be false to separate the evolution of a particular Gypsy tradition within Bulgaria from the surrounding social forces and structures that have directly, and indirectly shaped it. Vice versa, the cultural, economic and political development of the majority population has been influenced to varying degrees by the role of Gypsies within it.

By recognising this, we open up for discussion the possibility that 'anti-social' behaviour associated with socially excluded groups is not necessarily a sign of 'deficiency' or 'backwardness'. Instead, such behaviour could, in real terms, represent attempts at carving out strategies of survival in a world intent on their assimilation. My critique of social exclusion rests on the idea that no group is entirely cut off from, or immune to society and its functions. Building on the preliminary discussion of possible resistance as identified in the cultural practices of Gypsy groups and their tendency to reject schooling, the following chapter explores further possibilities of resistance on the part of

---

[70] G. G. Spivak, "Discussion: Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography", *Subaltern Studies*, 4, 1985, quoted by O'Nanlon, *op. cit.* p. 196.

Gypsies within the Bulgarian NGO sector. The thesis, therefore, suggests that Gypsies, like all other groups, are intertwined into the very structures of society, both positively and negatively, whether it be in the form of their collusion or resistance: the history and experiences of Gypsies is as much a story about wider society as it is about themselves.

CHAPTER 8

GYPSY COMPLIANCE AND RESISTANCE WITHIN THE BULGARIAN NGO SECTOR: A CASE STUDY

8.1 Introduction

If the complex position of Gypsies in and their ambivalent relations to wider Bulgarian society are revealed in the problems and possibilities of both compliance in and resistance to society's structures then an examination of their specific role within the NGO sector can provide us with a further means to explore the two interconnected processes within this analytical framework. At one level, an exploration of the NGO sector simply allows us to critically examine one particular dimension of Gypsy responses in Bulgaria during transition defined by liberal wisdom as formal and progressive. Second, and most importantly, as a popular strategy of inclusion for socially excluded groups, the NGO sector offers an important site of investigation for analysing the role of Gypsies in Bulgarian society in terms of their status as 'excluded'. Rather than NGOs simply empowering Gypsies to include themselves, the case study reveals that the use of this sector by many of those Gypsies active within it rests to varying degrees on the tension between compliance and resistance.[1] While revealing some of the problems inherent to the NGO sector as it stands, it also opens up for discussion the dimension left out by social exclusion theory; that is the complex dialectic that exists within and between Gypsies and society as a whole.

A case study of a Type B Bulgarian Gypsy-led foundation forms the empirical core to this analysis in which the everyday workings and rationale of Gypsy participation within this sector and wider society are explored. This chapter first examines more generally the ways in which Gypsies in Bulgaria have been playing the 'NGO game'. The case study

[1] It is important to note here that it is not only Gypsy groups in Eastern Europe who have been caught up in the dialectical tension of compliance and resistance and who have used conceptual frameworks such as that of human rights for their own purposes. It has also been observed in different contexts and with different groups. See, for example, Marta Bruno, "The Impact of Foreign Aid and Businesses on Women in the Moscow Labour Market", paper presented to the Seminar, *Transformation, Geography and Identity*, School of Geography, University of Birmingham, 11 June 1996. This paper addressed the different adapative strategies, patterns of resistance and work cultures that Russian women adopted in response to foreign models of aid and commercial organisation.

then allows us to explore more closely the intricacies of this 'game' and how different identities are 'played with'. An exploration of the extent to which such strategies support or are informed by more general strategies of survival as outlined in previous chapters forms the premise of this discussion. It reveals how there is a contrast between the orienting concepts used at the national and international level by governments and NGOs, and the concepts and objectives which are salient at the local level for the various Gypsy groups.

Ultimately for Gypsies, there is much overlap between the two seemingly distinct spheres of formal and informal activity; that is, between their involvement within the NGO sector and their pursuit of everyday survival strategies. As the case study will reveal, rather than one undermining the other, the informal and formal strategies employed by Gypsies work together as mechanisms for their survival. By breaking down the dichotomous view of Gypsy responses in this way, we can also question more rigorously the dichotomy of in/out that structures the rhetoric of social exclusion. As a result, it becomes apparent in the course of this discussion that the use of social exclusion theory to describe and explain the situation of Gypsies is not only misplaced in terms of its starting point, but also potentially very damaging in its restricted support of formal strategies at the expense of an understanding of this hidden dimension and its roots in existing survival strategies.

8.2 Gypsies and the 'NGO game'

The growing role of Gypsies within the Bulgarian NGO sector is partly a product of the attractiveness of Gypsy issues in gaining funding, and partly a product of the new Bulgarian constitution that has outlawed political parties based on ethnic grounds. As outlined in chapter 6, those NGOs working with Gypsies have tended to come from two different premises. First there were those NGOs whose roots lay not so much within a given Gypsy community, but in a commitment to the development of civil society or human rights. These NGOs then took on issues to do with Gypsies as part of their wider concern with representing and promoting these rights. The other type of NGOs were those that had grown out of Gypsy communities and whose first priority was with dealing

with and meeting the demands of Gypsies within their community. The adoption of human and minority rights frameworks were important insofar as meeting these objectives. Given that Gypsy communties and their interests have conventionally stood outside of party politics, Gypsy NGOs represented to political actors a new and important means for articulating these demands and interests.

While human rights were important to both types of NGOs, each used human rights for different ends. For example, a Type D NGO (i.e. one run entirely by non-Gypsies), while working under its previous name of the Committee for the Defence of Minority Rights, set out as its objectives the promotion of human rights:

> *-to try systematically to mould public opinion in the light of ethnic tolerance*
> *-to support minorities in community building*
> *-to take action to prevent any ethnic tensions from turning into destructive conflicts*
> *-to monitor the work of the State for guaranteeing the rights of members of ethnic communities.*[2]

Their emphasis on promoting human rights rested upon ideas of 'ethnic tolerance' and the avoidance of 'destructive conflicts.' This revealed that rather than being central, issues of minority rights were more subsidiary. The implicit agenda was ultimately one of 'inclusion' in that the minimisation of ethnic tensions would rest upon the insertion of minorities into the existing umbrella of rights. This contrasts sharply with those strategies adopted by Gypsy led NGOs. Rather than using Gypsy issues to promote human rights, their work rested upon a subtle interplay of human rights with Gypsy rights. In the words of Gheorghe and Acton, the human rights framework offered to Gypsy activists in Eastern Europe an effective means of ensuring a moral legitimacy for sustainable Gypsy political action without necessarily suppressing their diversity.[3] For example, the Human Rights Project in Sofia (a Type B NGO) used the human right discourse as their framework, but with the specific intention of targeting human right abuses of Gypsies. By monitoring and publicising police brutality against Gypsies, coupled with promoting

---

[2] Kaline Bozeva (ed.), *Minority Groups in Bulgaria in a Human Rights Context,* Committee for the Defence of Minority Rights, Sofia, 1994. p. 1.

[3] Nicolae Gheorghe and Thomas Acton, "Dealing with Multiculturality: Minority, Ethnic, National and Human Rights." In Council of Europe (ed.), *Gypsies in the Locality,* Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1994a.

Gypsy rights in other spheres of social and political life, they were able to use human rights as a means of actively resisting growing anti-Gypsy violence in Bulgarian society.

Gypsy NGO leaders whose roots lay in Gypsy communities were finding other ways subtly to 'play the NGO game'. The process of registration, whether it be under the Union of Bulgarian Foundations and Associations (UBFA), or just through the courts, proved for many a useful way of broadening their chances of receiving funding. This was especially important given that donors tended to restrict their funding for a given foundation to one time only. As observed during my fieldwork, therefore, and also noted by Marushiakova and Popov, many NGOs registered themselves under different names and addresses.[4] In this way it soon became apparent that seemingly distinct NGOs were interconnected, whether financially or in terms of their day-to-day running. For example the foundation called 'Roma - Women for Charity' based in Sliven, run by Mrs. Tanja Archikova and the foundation called 'Women for Charity "Roma" ', also based in Sliven and run by Mrs. Pepa Pehlivanova were in fact one NGO despite being registered separately. The 'Union of Romani Women and Children' led by Mrs. Penka Karagiozova; the Roma Youth Club led by Stefan Yugov and the 'Roma- Foundation for Regional Development' led by Mr. Anton Karagiozov were all registered separately although operating on the same premises and as one NGO. Another example is with the 'United Roma Union' directed by Vassil Chaprazov and the 'Roma Bureau for Mutual Support' led by Georgi Golov. These two NGOs were registered separately but in fact were mutually supportive, as a result of which the latter enabled the continued existence of the former. There were also NGOs who were registered using the same names, but who had no formal connections. For example, although there were two NGOs registered under the name of Confederation of the Roma Population, one was a local organisation quite distinct from the nation-wide organisation led by Peter Gueorguiev. This complex network revealed not only the overlap that characterised many of the NGOs working in

[4] Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, "Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria - Literacy, Policy and Community Development (1985-1995)", *Alpha*, UNESCO, Institute for Education, 1997.

this field, but also how even the process of registration could be manipulated as a tool for increasing funding possibilities.

The use by Gypsy-led NGOs of mainstream institutions for their own advantage could also be found in other more subtle spheres of NGO activity. Organising seminars and conferences seemed to be one of the main activities of NGOs, including those run by Gypsies, whether they be training seminars, feedback seminars or international conferences. Common to all was the 'cocktail evening' with plentiful food and Rakia and a fusion of traditional Bulgarian and Gypsy live music. This was where you saw the side that the formality of the NGO sector concealed - yet the side Gypsies in particular wanted you to see. An international conference organised by a leading Gypsy intellectual about Gypsy children and education held at the end of November 1997 provided a good illustration of how, during the 'cocktail evening', they were keen to play up the romantic Gypsy ideal of being care-free and exotic in a dazzling display of colourful Gypsy costumes and belly dancing for the mixture of international, Bulgarian and Gypsy guests. In this way they were playing with 'our' myth of the 'genuine' Gypsy and turning it back against 'ourselves' in order to promote themselves in a way we found pleasing, thereby securing some kind of credibility and sympathy with the audience.[5]

8.3 Sites of conflict and resolution

Although able in many cases to play the 'NGO game', Gypsy-led NGOs more than most were constrained within a particular context of structural inequality shaped by persistent institutionalised discrimination. The reluctance of local authorities to work with Gypsy NGOs was one such example of this. I met with many examples of this during my

[5] This is not unusual and is a strategy adopted by Gypsies in a wide range of different fields. The fortune teller and the hawker for example use this strategy, by presenting themselves to us in the way that they have learnt we find pleasing. A similar observation was drawn by Lemon who, in her discussion about the ways in which Gypsy actors in Russia negotiated their representation in the theatre, both under the Soviet regime and since, raises some interesting questions about the use of 'real' Gypsy actors and images in order to portray 'authenticity'. Her observations of the Moscow Teatr Romen, revealed that contrary to the intended outcome, performances were far from authentic, instead displaying traditions that only the Gadjo director, and Gadjo audiences perceived as 'authentic'. Although completely different settings, the implications for the interplay of public and hidden transcripts were the same: the public transcript was the Gadjo myth of the Gypsy; the hidden one was their use of it for their own purposes. Alaina Lemon, "Hot Blood and Black Pearls: Socialism, Society and Authenticity at the Moscow Teatr Romen", *Theatre Journal*, 48, 1996. pp. 479-494.

fieldwork in Bulgaria. The Foundation 'New Life For Bulgarian Roma', in Sliven explained to me the nature of their current project and its problems. They had organised a series of training seminars for 12 Gypsy NGOs involving speakers from the police, the prison, the courts and municipalities. However, as yet none of the invited guests from local authorities had turned up to any of these seminars.[6] Another NGO receiving similar messages from its local authorities acknowledged that the apparent lack of interest on the part of state officials encouraged NGOs to seek 'alternative' means of helping Gypsies. They stressed, though, that ideally the role of NGOs should be to mediate between the state and Gypsy communities.[7]

Within other spheres of NGO-local authority relations, however, some Gypsy NGOs were a little more successful in building up a positive rapport, although the situation in general remained poor. It was no secret that Gypsy NGOs were generally resented by local authorities in terms of their relative prosperity. In contrast to the police force in Bulgaria, for example, which since 1989 has suffered from a major decline in resources, wages and morale,[8] NGOs have expanded benefiting those traditionally seen as being at the bottom of the pile. In some regions the local police have been as a result openly hostile to such NGOs. However, I was able to witness the way in which one NGO had managed to turn this situation around. This NGO had offered to local police officers the use of their equipment in the office when necessary, such as photocopying and printing. At least at a surface level, this had led to the forging of good relations with the local police.[9]

While some NGOs had attempted to turn the change in fortunes to their own advantage, others were keen to play up the possibility of 'ethnic conflict' erupting between Gypsies and Bulgarians, if only at the level of aggression and civil protest.[10] Both these types of

---

[6] Interview: B (7) 21.10.97.

[7] Interview: A (6) 20.10.97.

[8] Interview with Inspector Richard Groves, 2.9.97. See also, R. Groves "Development Within Policing and the Roma Community in Nadejhda, Bulgaria", *OSCE - CPRSI Newsletter*, 3(2), April, 1997.

[9] This was observed during one of my visits to the NGO B (3).

[10] Interview B (7) 21.10.97.

responses by Gypsy NGOs to their hostile surroundings reflected a different picture to that painted by a somewhat pessimistic NGO leader, who bemoaned the high level of apathy that plagued Gypsy communities:

> *Roma are not interested in who is ruling the country, their only goal is physical survival. Prisons are full of Roma, many seek to enter prison as it represents a safe place - they can get food, even a job, so is better than the ghetto.*[11]

The complex mixture of apathy and frustration, the ambiguity of portraying Gypsy culture as valid, yet colluding with Gadjo ideas of what it is to be a Gypsy, and the use of human rights within the specific context of securing Gypsy rights are all displayed in the following case study of the Romani Bah Foundation. A combined method of interviews and participant observation formed the basis of this case study, as discussed in the introduction. This foundation was situated in Faculteta which, with an estimated population of between 25-30,000, was one of the largest Gypsy *mahalas* in Sofia, the Bulgarian capital. The location of the office actually within 'the ghetto' allowed for the observation of both the internal operations of the office, and their direct relations with the local community on a daily basis. While offering many insights into the complex and often inconsistent world of NGOs, this case study also allows for a discussion on some of the benefits and difficulties of my methodological approach.

8.4 The Romani Bah Foundation: A case study

The Romani Bah Foundation represented a type B NGO in that it was run by and employed Gypsies from within its community, yet also employed those from outside, including both Gypsies and Gadjos. This foundation was fairly well established and had its roots in an existing human rights foundation, the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee. It was generally well respected by credible scholars, other NGOs and to a large extent by its surrounding community. Like many other Gypsy-led NGOs that I had contact with, it had as its basis a form of advice bureau, a semi-permanent status, a mixture of Gypsy and Gadjo staff, currently active projects and some kind of political background. However, as with all case studies, there were certain factors that differentiated this NGO from others.

[11] Interview B (6) 20.10.97.

For example, unlike some, this foundation did not place any emphasis on a nation-wide structure of membership and network of organisations. Also, this foundation although a product of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, was a registered NGO in its own right and did not have any other foundations registered within it.

By revealing the strategies employed by Gypsy led NGOs, this case study makes a series of observations at a number of levels. First, it explores the extent to which the NGO encouraged compliance, yet at the same time offered scope for reinforcing different elements of resistance within the wider aim of Gypsy survival. Second, it explores the kind of benefits and drawbacks experienced by those Gypsy leaders who, for whatever reason, appropriated conceptual frameworks of human rights or community development. Third, and underpinning both of these, was a concern with describing what happened in terms of the time of day, setting and sequence of events. This part of the anlysis was based on the following working questions: "What is going on in these NGOs?"; "what do people in this setting have to know (individually and collectively) in order to do what they are doing?"; and "how are skills transmitted and acquired?".

The case study therefore worked at both a descriptive and analytical level, providing a clear picture of the daily and long term problems and aspirations that characterised such NGOs. The case study first of all details the history of the foundation. It then offers an overview of the current activities with a special focus on its main project, the 'Godi e Romenge Project', coupled with the on-going procedures of project application. The nature of the relations that form the working essence of this foundation both internally and externally are then addressed in terms of Gypsy/Gadjo and insider/outsider dynamics. Finally the idea of there being a hidden dimension is explored in terms of the use of wider survival strategies in the articulation of their work within the NGO.

Regarded as a 'good' NGO by the likes of Marushiakova and Popov, the Romani Bah Foundation offered a compromise between co-operation with Gadjo NGOs, yet a commitment to Gypsy interests. It displayed a down to earth approach, that was informed

by both a recognition for long term goals, yet also a commitment to helping with the day to day struggles of their local community.

8.5 History

The Romani Bah Foundation was set up in 1995 as a spin-off from the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC), a human rights organisation.[12] The BHC, in its published newsletter 'Obketiv', defined itself as an independent non-governmental organisation for the protection of human rights. It was founded on July 14 1992 and initially set up office in Faculteta. The members of BHC included Antonina Zhelyazkova (The International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations), Dimitrina Petrova (previously Chairperson of the Human Rights Project and now of the European Roma Rights Centre, Hungary), Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov (leading Gypsy specialists), Kalina Bozeva (Inter Ethnic Initiatives for Human Rights) and Vassil Chaprazov (United Roma Union). Although formally based on a commitment to human rights, the BHC situated in Faculteta had at its heart Gypsy issues with contribution from a range of activists.

In August 1995 the BHC launched a project supported by the Dutch Foundation CEBEMO for renovating "75th School Todor Kableshkov" in Faculteta. Mihail Gueorgiev, a local Gypsy who co-ordinated this went on to form a new organisation in conjunction with the activities of BHC, which would later become the Romani Bah Foundation. The office for this new foundation was also set up in Faculteta. In line with the BHC, the original aim of this foundation was to try and resolve the most extreme problems of Gypsies by linking human rights with those of minorities. The original project of constructing new classrooms and a canteen area for the school in Faculteta indicated that the emphasis would be on direct action regarding the local community. This project was proving to take longer than had been anticipated and was still underway at the time of my visit in 1997. The kind of reasons given by the leader as to why it had

---

[12] I gathered details about the Foundation's short history mainly from their most recent report: Romani Bah Foundation *"Report"*, September 1997, and also from the interviews and general conversations. The purpose of the report was to show their 'results' to the donors concerned. Copies would then be issued to any interested parties, including local officials, for example, during meetings.

yet to be completed ranged from factors of bad weather conditions to a lack of materials. At this point no references were made to wider structural problems within the NGO sector or indeed institutional obstacles posed by local authorities.

In August 1996, with the support of BHC, Gueorgiev and those involved in the original project extended their activities through the realisation of a parallel project. The aims, this time, were to provide, free of charge, legal and administrative consultation. The 1997 Report stated that the creation of this project was seen as a necessary response to the needs of the surrounding Gypsy population, who were largely unfamiliar with Bulgarian legislation and had no means by which to pay for legal services. This consultancy required engaging the support of professional lawyers. A Gadjo lawyer was subsequently employed setting the precedent for inter-ethnic, or inter-community co-operation. At first, the lawyer's role was only at the level of consultation. It was soon realised, however, that this status needed to be expanded to allow for active intervention in judicial problems. This project was called *Godi e Romenge* (Help for Roma) and was financed by the European Roma Rights Centre, Hungary. The existence of these two projects formalised the establishment of the Romani Bah Foundation.

When the legal consultation got underway paid staff were gradually taken on, which at the time of my visit included the following (all were Gypsies except Betty and the two lawyers): Gueorgiev (Executive director), Maria (Administrative Director), Metodi Majarov (Technician), Betty (Social Assistance Project Leader), Bistra (Accountant), Yanush (collaborator, not officially on the pay roll but took a percentage from the lawyers fees) and Metodi Dimitrov (Life Saving Vouchers Scheme Project Leader). On average they earned about US$100 per month except Yanush whose wage as a percentage of the lawyers was smaller. Extra staff included builders and security men, who were employed from the local community, as well as two practising lawyers. Their wages come out of the funding provided for the *Godi e Romenge* Project. This formed a steady base from which the foundation could appeal for more funding, employ more people and get more equipment, which they saw as an ongoing process.

8.6 Current activities

The glamour and prestige associated with the American way of life is synonymous with that of the West for many people in Eastern Europe. Just as people living in the West have misconstrued pre-conceptions about Eastern Europe, so do those in the East have about the West. This office, however, was far from glamorous. Instead, it was industrious, sometimes unpredictable and like with any other office it was, at times, rather dull.

The first time I visited their office I was met by Maria at the end tram-stop nearest to Faculteta. She had phoned me the day before to arrange for me to come. It seemed that an entire afternoon had been put aside for my visit. With Maria and my interpreter, we were then driven the rest of the way by Gueorgiev, the 'executive director'. Gueorgiev had ensured that all the staff were present. Including my interpreter and me, there were eight people present for the interview. Gueorgiev's status became clear in the course of the interview, in which he took the leading role either giving information, or allocating someone else to. From the beginning, Gueorgiev made it clear that I had to co-ordinate any future visits to Faculteta through him. My immediate status as Gadjo indicated to Gueorgiev that I was to be 'controlled' to some extent. This was typical of most of my contact with Gypsy led NGOs throughout Bulgaria, most of whom were insistent on taking charge of my visits to Gypsy *mahalas.*[13] Such power politics among Gypsy leaders towards Gadjos, whereby they are keen to exert some kind of social control in order to protect the interests of Gypsies as a group, have also been observed in other contexts, showing that this was not something peculiar to this foundation.[14]

The relaxed and informal nature of the initial meeting was typical of all my subsequent meetings with them and contrasted sharply with the tendency on the part of Gueorgiev to

---

[13] E.g. The URU in Sliven, the FRD in Plovdiv, and the Roma Foundation in Rousse.

[14] Sutherland, for example, discusses it in her study of Gypsy politics in the United States. While acknowledging that one of the most apparent characteristics of the politically active Rom in the USA is that they are almost constantly involved in conflict with each other. Sutherland also makes the point that they have an equally strong sense of solidarity as a group. Ann Sutherland, *Gypsies: The Hidden Americans*, Tavistock, London, 1975. pp. 97-138.

control me. They had laid on food and drinks with traditional Gypsy music playing in the background. Later, they referred to the music and asked if I liked it. Laughing, they then joked that they were 'setting the right atmosphere'. This seemed to signal, however subtly, one way in which a 'public transcript', i.e. popular Gypsy music, was used to assist in their hidden one, i.e. their task of enlisting support. The popular face of Gypsy culture was again being self-consciously played back to the Gadjo in order to engage their support (which in this case was me), or as in their own words 'to set the right atmosphere'. This atmosphere was further enhanced by a spacious, well equipped and thoughtfully decorated office. There were plants and traditional Gypsy crafts, such as baskets and dried flowers displayed around the room. They were all obviously proud of their office, which was demonstrated in their dedication to its cleanliness and upkeep.

Gueorgiev and Maria were clearly the most prominent actors within this NGO. Gueorgiev had been instrumental in setting it up and Maria shortly followed. As a result, both came across as the most confident and informed. Although my first meeting with Maria had been rather short, my second meeting with her, 6 weeks later, got off to a more promising start. In my absence, she had read an article about me in '24 Chasa', a Bulgarian daily tabloid. It had stated that I had been attacked by a group of Gypsies in Stolipinovo (the main Gypsy *mahala* in Plovdiv), who had stolen US$5,000 from me. On my return I explained to her, that, although I had had some money stolen from me (US$60), it was in the city centre and I had never identified the thief, never mind claimed it to be a Gypsy. Our agreement about the ludicrous nature of the story formed some, albeit tentative, common ground. It was during the course of my participant observation that we became closer. With my entering into a world unfamiliar to me, and with her excessive workload and stress, we found much solace and enjoyment in each other's company.

A few days after my initial meeting I returned to the office as arranged for a closer look around the district of Faculteta. During this visit Gueorgiev invited me to come back and 'work' with them for a couple of weeks, in order that I gain more of an idea about what the foundation was *really* like. He also invited me to a wedding that evening, which he

himself was attending with his family in the city centre. Welcoming opportunities as they arose, I accepted his invitation for both. We met in the reception as planned, where he introduced me to all his family. While waiting to enter the main hall, he advised me that later I would be expected to give some money to the bride's mother, a tradition that every guest was expected to carry out to help with expenses. In much the same manner I was included into all the various proceedings that typified such an event, whether it be dancing, eating or drinking. A live Gypsy band provided the music, which played a mixture of Bulgarian and Gypsy music. His delight in showing me this other side of Gypsy life embodied Gueorgiev's whole approach to his work. In their work they were encouraged not to differentiate between NGO work and everyday living; each was to inform the other. Staff members would partake in celebrations in the office or at each other's homes. One day, for example, I, along with Gueorgiev, Maria, Bistra and Yanush were invited to Metodi's house for lunch. His wife had cooked a huge meal, during which they seized the opportunity to find out more about me. Not restrained by office structures, and within a more informal setting, they felt at ease to question me about myself and my family. This more relaxed, open approach fed into their work and provided a friendly, although at times volatile base.

A sense of good humour permeated the office punctuated by intermittent outbursts from Gueorgiev. A day of celebration, for example, with the marriage of one of the lawyers, would be followed by a day of tense relations. The level of activity would also shift dramatically from one day to the next depending on external developments such as new announcements on social assistance, or the supply of electricity. In these circumstances much of the time was spent either frantically filling out forms, or sitting around waiting for the electricity to come back on. On a number of occasions we were plunged into darkness without warning for indefinite periods of time.

There was a sense that everyone had their own tasks. This was demonstrated in the initial introductions, in that each member of staff was defined according to their 'position'. However, in reality, their roles often overlapped, where for example, filling out social

assistance forms for the local inhabitants demanded the help of everyone in the office at that time regardless of their ascribed status.[15] On another level, and typical of all project-based, donor-dependent NGOs, all employees were driven by at least one motive, that is, to keep the NGO alive. Work for everyone would grow more hectic as new projects needed to be designed and proposals polished up. This meant having to pool efforts in the devising of new projects, an endeavour which Gueorgiev was keen to encourage, even with me. Wanting to make the most of my presence, Gueorgiev asked me to assist Majarov and Maria in putting together those proposals that needed to be composed in English. While being of help to him, such interaction was also of great benefit to me and my own agenda. I was able to forge closer links with other members of the staff and get a sense of how projects were composed and how NGO workers viewed them.

8.7 The 'Godi e Romenge' Project

This project formed the central pillar to this foundation and was based on the provision of a legal consultancy. Held three times a week at set times, two practising Bulgarian lawyers would come at their allotted time to give feedback on on-going cases or take note of new ones. This project was aimed specifically at offering a legal mediator between the communities in Faculteta and the local state institutions. At first it provided help with a variety of urgent cases. Gradually, however, the emphasis shifted towards cases that were tied to wider issues of human rights. Representing Gypsies in criminal cases constituted a substantial part of their work with the foundation. One of the lawyers had just settled a case for one of her clients, who, charged with stealing 500 pairs of shoes, was at risk of being imprisoned for a large number of years.[16] However, she had managed to get a reduced sentence of 18 months, with the possibility of early release on the payment of a fine. In most cases the defence of criminal cases involved a lengthy preliminary investigation and detention and court hearings could be delayed for over a year, during which the client would be forcibly detained.[17]

---

[15] However, this did not tend to include Gueorgiev.

[16] In Bulgaria, sentencing criteria still rests upon the former system, which, the lawyer acknowledged, was totally outdated.

[17] See for example, European Roma Rights Centre (ed.), *Profession: Prisoner - Roma in Detention in Bulgaria*, Country Reports Series No. 6, December, Budapest, 1997.

While part of their work was defending people in criminal cases, an equally common legal problem that they had to deal with was the legalising of newly built houses. A substantial number of the houses in Faculteta were built on either state or municipal land without planning permission. As this was in breach of the Territorial and Urban Development Act, the municipality had the right to confiscate these plots without compensation. The foundation recognised the potentially disastrous implications of this, especially in light of a new regulation plan drawn up in 1993 which required that 30 per cent of housing in Facultata be forcibly purchased. The need for inhabitants to become legal owners of their own homes was therefore all the more urgent. This involved intervening and speeding up the process of acquiring the necessary title deeds, which at best could take up to two to three months. Three witnesses are needed to testify that the person in question had lived in their property for at least ten years. On one occasion a local elderly man came to seek advice concerning his on-going problem with legalising his house. He wanted to ensure that before he died he became the legal owner of his home, thereby keeping it within the family. Although he had the necessary witnesses, in order that the title deed be granted, a state representative had to come and view the property. However, despite promises from the department concerned, no such representative had yet come. In the meantime he could do nothing but wait. This was typical of many of the cases that the lawyers at this foundation had to deal with.

The legal registration of children was another key issue for the *Godi e Romenge* Project. For a marriage to be legally valid in Bulgaria it had to go through the proper channels as set out by state law. Many marriages, however, within Gypsy communities were carried out according only to Gypsy traditional law.[18] As a result many marriages within Gypsy communities were not legally recognised. As a consequence, children born of Gypsy parents were often defined as 'fatherless'. Gypsy parents therefore had to go through a legal process of registering the father of the child in order that they be defined as the

[18] Stewart discusses in his book on the Rom in Hungary that, in Gypsy culture it tends to be only birth and death ceremonies which require the church, and that marriage ceremonies remain a private affair insofar as they are not legally recognised by the state. Michael Stewart, *The Time of the Gypsies*, Westview Press, Oxford, 1997.

rightful guardians. This was important for gaining access to rights otherwise denied to them such as certain state allowances.

During my stay, a young couple came in seeking advice on this very issue having just had a baby. Although they had had a Gypsy wedding it had not been carried out according to Bulgarian state law and so their marriage was not legally recognised. They therefore had to fill out a special form that would register the father of the child. This marked the beginning of a fairly simple process which required the writing and signing of a declaration. There would be no need for court proceedings. However, advice on and support for filling out the form was necessary, with which only Betty was directly familiar having previously worked for the Social Services.

Tied in with this were implications of securing child maintenance for those mothers who did not have a father registered for their child. The payment of child allowance and benefits for single mothers was therefore another major issue. Although by law single mothers were eligible for social security, in most cases those single mothers who were Gypsies were denied payments on the basis of discrimination. The lawyers, in such cases, had specific roles to play in pursuing these claims. While illustrating the kind of direct work this foundation was employed in, it also served to highlight the importance of having outsiders' "expertise".

8.8 Project proposals

One of the issues that dominated their work during my stay was a concern with finding ways to stretch funding to meet unanticipated costs. This had direct implications for the payment of wages, which was the cause of much tension within the office, although not expressed formally. It also affected the payment of the high legal fees, and those wages needed for the extra security guards, which was a new requirement given that interior development on the school was about to begin.

One of the main concerns for the NGO during my stay was the need to create new angles on the main existing project, *Godi e Romenge,* in order to extend its rapidly expiring funding beyond its original time limit. However, it was not possible to return to the original donors, the ERRC, as it was stipulated that they could only fund a NGO once. This meant that the Romani Bah Foundation had to look elsewhere. The last resort was Phare. There was a genuine fear that they may not have work in 6 months time. The parallel development of entirely new projects was therefore also actively encouraged.

There was an awareness on their part of having to use a particular language when applying for funding.[19] Not only was it necessary to comply with the criteria set out by the donors, but it was essential that the correct terminology was adopted. For example, in their description of those Gypsies living within 'Cambodia' - the name given by residents to the 'ghetto' within Faculteta - the foundation used terms of 'social isolation' and problems of 'integration'.

> *People here are illiterate and unemployed, hence it is difficult for them to maintain their families and look after their children, who are forced, from a very young age, instead of attending school, to find a way of making a living. This condemns them to total isolation in future and it is impossible for them to be integrated socially.*[20]

These references to ideas of 'total isolation' and difficulties of 'integration' do not add anything to their point about illiteracy and unemployment, and therefore act as a rhetorical device. The deployment of such terminology is a deliberate response to the expectations placed on them as a NGO. However, by doing so they did not necessarily fall into the trap of laying the blame with these particular Gypsies themselves, for elsewhere structural obstacles were explicitly identified. For example, they cite, "the numerous instances of refusal on the part of the Social Security Service [...] to receive applications for children allowances and benefits for single mothers" as an important source of poverty for many families.[21]

---

[19] Again this is not peculiar to Gypsy NGOs in Eastern Europe and has been noted in other similar contexts. For example, Bruno, *op. cit.*

[20] Romani Bah Foundation *"Report"*, September 1997. p. 6.

[21] *Ibid.*

It was often the case that concepts of 'integration' and 'civil society' would be appropriated even in those cases when they were not directly relevant. Their proposal for the carrying out of a socio-demographic survey of Faculteta was one example of this process. Combining Betty's knowledge of the social services and Majarov's 'knack' at composing the appropriate language,[22] and in co-operation with the Democracy Center, it was hoped that they would be able to secure funding from Phare for a period of at least 6 months. Based on a genuine commitment to securing reliable data for this particular district it was hoped that much needed accurate information would be made available to policy makers. It was also hoped that employment opportunities would be created for local Gypsies in terms of the task force that would be required. In their application for funding, however, their emphasis was expressed not so much in terms of providing vital employment for local residents, but more in terms of Western concepts of participation and civil society:

> *This socio-demographic survey of Faculteta will be carried out by a Romani foundation which in itself stands testimony to the increased social role Roma are playing in Bulgarian society. That such organisations are participating in the search for solutions to important questions is a sign of the development of a civil society.*[23]

After submission it was returned soon after with the request to to provide a more detailed breakdown of costs, CVs of all those involved and a letter from the Democracy Center. Most significant, however, was their request for an expansion of the section on democracy and civil society in terms of how exactly this project would contribute more profoundly to the work of the Democracy Centre. In compliance with the donor's stipulations these tasks were carried out without delay.

Another example was a proposal for a project concerned with improving residential policies towards Gypsy homes. The long term goals of their project were to improve the conditions for the Gypsy population, in terms of education and health. Real and practical

---

[22] In the words of the secretary, Majarov was renowned for his ability to come up with all the right 'bullshit'.

[23] Romani Bah Foundation and Centre for the Study of Democracy, *"Project: Socio-Demographic Survey of the Population of 'Faculteta' District"*, 1997.

objectives were established in terms of changing legal structures, improving infrastructure and tackling poverty. Within the framework of their project proposal, however, they stated that this would, "improve the economic status of all Roma in Bulgaria and thereby help smooth their integration into macro-society."[24] Again, we can see the subtle insertion of NGO rhetoric as shaped by the liberal discourse of 'integration.' Using this particular frame of reference NGOs like the Romani Bah Foundation could place into mainstream discussion more radical proposals for improving the situation of Gypsies.

Using a similar framework, they also formulated a proposal for the British Embassy based on education. They asked for funding to carry out a comparative survey of two different schools in a nearby district. One would be a school that was composed entirely of Bulgarian pupils, and the other of Gypsy pupils. The aim would be to compare attendance, teaching methods, success rates and problems. The findings would then be published and presented to state bodies. As part of the overall project, they also asked for further funding on their existing project to renovate the local school, in terms of providing basic materials, such as books and computers. The agenda of the project was ultimately direct and practical, yet also had long term implications for drawing attention to and enabling further research into the ethnic dimensions of schooling.

Their proposals for education reform and their focus on improving local schools were rooted not so much in improving the vocational curriculum in order that Gypsies become more interested (often the focus of other NGOs), but in redressing the imbalance in education that systematically discriminated against them. Through demonstration (they were partaking in university courses themselves) as well as through concrete project proposals such as this, this foundation showed a commitment to promoting education not just as a tool for Gypsy survival, but for their equal participation in formal as well as informal societal structures.

---

[24] Romani Bah Foundation, *"Project: Territorial Structure of Roma Regions and Residential Policy of the Roma Community"*, 1997.

Finally, although they did not discuss participation as a methodology, the aims and strategies of this foundation were clearly concerned with finding concrete ways to encourage greater Gypsy participation. One of the ways they were doing this was by bringing representatives from the Gypsy community into processes of decision-making in the form of a Community Council. This council consisted of nine members, all of whom were Gypsies 'with a good reputation' who lived in Faculteta. Decisions would normally be taken twice a month by this council at sessions chaired by one of the lawyers. Various issues would be discussed, such as what legal cases would be taken up and who was eligible for receiving legal aid. Representatives from the Community Council would also be present during NGO meetings with outside bodies, such as the electricity board.

Therefore rather than arguing that foundations like Romani Bah did not believe in principles of democracy and participation it is possible to see that by taking Gypsies as their starting point they were more concerned with using such concepts in order to promote the rights of Gypsies. This stood in contrast to those NGOs that held human rights as pivotal to their work. They tended to use the degree of Gypsy integration as a yardstick by which to measure the extent to which democracy or civil society had developed. The activities of these types of NGOs in the field of Gypsy rights therefore represented more a means to an end rather than a vital strategy in its own right.

8.9 Internal Relations

As with all office politics, there was a mixture of simmering tension and strong friendships within the workplace. Daily meetings were held either at the beginning or at the end of each working day in which every member of staff attended including, when convenient, the two lawyers. Led by Gueorgiev, these staff meetings were important for discussing and evaluating problems and progress, as well as pooling ideas. Tasks would be allocated and roles within the foundation confirmed. For example, Gueorgiev was keen to stress to one of the lawyers present during one such meeting that, as a legal representative for this foundation, her presence at official meetings was vital.

Those within the foundation saw the relationship that had been forged with the lawyers as having strengthened their credibility with other NGOs and most importantly with local authorities. However, Gueorgiev's hiring of a Gadjo employee from Social Services, had not been so warmly welcomed. As the only non-Gypsy Bulgarian full time member of staff, her role within the foundation was the cause of underlying tensions. Gueorgiev had hired Betty without the consent of the rest of the staff, who, on their part, initially resented his decision. The conflicts that surrounded this Bulgarian member of staff pointed towards a number of interesting points. She had only recently just begun, having started just a few months before my arrival, and was finding it difficult to fit in. The first time this became obvious was during my first meeting with them. When I had taken a few moments to absorb the breadth of information that had been delivered to me, Betty openly empathised with me. She said that she understood the difficulty of grasping everything at first, a comment that would grow in significance during the course of my stay there.

Due to close contact with one of the staff members and observations of my own, it became clear that Betty was perceived by most of the staff as some kind of threat. Maria, in justifying her own remarks about Betty being an outsider, explained how Betty acted and how she was at first received by the other members of staff. Much to everyone else's amusement Betty had at first apparently 'clucked' around Gueorgiev, asking if he wanted a cup of tea, or needed any help. This confirmed to the others that she was an outsider, not so much because Betty had somehow mistook Gueorgiev as the leader, for he clearly was, but because her behaviour displayed a lack of awareness about how to behave within a Gypsy NGO. According to Maria, she treated Gueorgiev as the boss, rather than a team leader. Despite her comments about feeling over-worked and under valued by Gueorgiev, who contrary to earlier promises had failed to promote her to the status of co-director, Maria strongly maintained that this foundation did not run on a hierarchy.[25]

[25] Maria told me of how her mother had come into the office on a number of occasions to complain to Gueorgiev about working her too hard. Maria had used to work seven day weeks, but this had recently been reduced to six days.

This comical view of Betty being 'out of touch' was quickly replaced by feelings of frustration on the part of Maria, and according to her, the others too. She argued that Betty often referred to Gypsies as 'your people' and always claimed to know more than 'them', i.e. the Gypsy members of staff. However, Gueorgiev had employed her precisely because she had experience with Social Services, a major component of their work, and according to a reliable colleague, she had always displayed a healthy attitude towards Gypsies. It was clear that Gueorgiev could offer her more money working for him, and in return he could benefit from her insider's knowledge of the Social Services.

Despite (or because of) this obvious tactic of employing a Gadjo, not only in an attempt to build Gypsy and Gadjo relations, but also to have some expertise in the otherwise hostile sphere of social services, Betty was ultimately received as an outsider, who would always be an outsider. Although the lawyers were also Gadjo, they were not treated by the others with as much suspicion, rather they were welcomed. The status of the lawyers was markedly different from that of Betty. Betty was employed full-time and her work was fully integrated with the others. The boundaries of her work were therefore not clearly marked out. In contrast, the lawyers came to the office only for three set periods per week and were employed on negotiated terms that clearly defined their specific tasks of representing Gypsies in the Gadjo world. This subtle distinction in terms of the grounds on which they were employed shaped their status within the foundation and how they were received by the existing NGO staff members.

Maria, herself, was an 'outsider' to some extent in that she had been brought up on a mixed estate on the other side of Sofia. She distuingushed herself from her co-workers and from the 'ghetto mentality' in general. She believed that those who lived in Faculteta were trapped by their circumstances to a large extent and could not see a world beyond their own. For her, though, it was different. She had gone to university, she now had a

---

Gueorgiev remained firm on other grounds, however. He still refused to pay her social security and was reluctant for her to study for a degree while working for him.

job, she was fluent in another language, and she wanted more. Her determination to 'do something' with her life contrasted sharply with some of the other members of staff. Not all the members of staff were educated to her level. Most of them lived and had been brought up in Faculteta. Two of them in particular were more comfortable speaking Romani rather than Bulgarian. Indeed, the language spoken when dealing with inhabitants from the quarter was nearly always Romani. Furtherstill, the participation in a Public Administration course at the New Bulgarian University, was proving to be hard and far from stimulating for certain members of the staff.

Maria often expressed frustration with what she saw as time wasting on the part of some of her colleagues. Embroiled in the gossip of everyday life in Faculteta, these members of staff held themselves back from pushing themselves professionally within the foundation, therefore imposing the bulk of the workload on her. In turn, she was increasingly aware of how such apathy reflected poorly on the foundation as a whole, undermining the trust that she and Gueorgiev had found so hard initially to build with the community. During the daily staff meetings, the imbalance of input soon became apparent, where some were clearly more willing than others to contribute.

8.10 External relations

Maria, as one of the original employees of this foundation, had spoken of early difficulties with building up trust with local communities. However, their relations with the surrounding community at the time of my visit seemed productive and stable. The employment of locals by the foundation, coupled with the provision of a friendly legal and social service in terms of advice and practical help made the foundation immediately accessible to the surrounding inhabitants, who on their part seemed to be making effective use of it. The relationship of this foundation with other NGOs was also fairly strong, based on existing networks carved out by BHC. Through their *Godi e Romenge* Project, for example, the Romani Bah Foundation organised in co-operation with the BHC, CEGA and the Inter Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights, a conference aimed at tackling problems of infrastructure and town planning associated with Gypsy urban

settlements like Faculteta. The conference, which took place on 25-26 June 1997, involved representatives from the parliament and Council of Ministers as well as from local authorities and NGO members from across Bulgaria.

However, the foundation had to contend with wider problems inherent to the NGO structure. An example of this was with the types of problems they encountered with their life saving vouchers scheme. This scheme, aimed at meeting the costs of medical care for those who could not afford it and working in co-operation with the BHC, was funded by the Foundation Aid to Charity in Bulgaria. The Romani Bah Foundation had agreements with the Fifth City Clinic and Hospital and the Third United Regional Hospital. There were numerous examples of patients who had so far benefited from this scheme. However, administrative problems had soon begun to arise. The donors, as part of their conditions for funding, were demanding weekly reports from the hospital administrators. However, the hospitals involved claimed that they could not produce their reports so quickly. Therefore, the Romani Bah Foundation had to negotiate with both parties to try and find a solution. This was one illustration of the kind of problems that existed in terms of the conflicts between the expectations of the donors and everyday demands that workers faced at the ground level.

The foundation also had to face obstacles put up by local authorities; by being included into the NGO sector they were effectively being cut off from real decision making at governmental levels. NGOs were accepted by the government at a formal level insofar as they relieved some of the responsibilities of the state. However, at the ground level anything beyond this formal recognition was underpinned by a general sense of uneasiness towards NGOs on the part of local officials. This was evident in the types of relations maintained by Gypsy NGOs and various state bodies at the local level, the nature of which depended on the type of state body and its place within the overall hierarchy.

First there were those state bodies that were more distanced from central control, which included, for example, telephone companies and emergency services. The problems faced by this foundation in attempting to co-operate with these particular local authorities were made explicit when their services were required in Faculteta. It seemed the case that those Gypsies living in Faculteta could not rely on local emergency services if taken seriously ill. Even when help was sought from the NGO in terms of making the necessary phone calls, which during my stay happened on two occasions, the line was either cut, or the ambulance simply refused to come.

Slightly higher up in the hierarchy were those bodies involved in official state business, but which also had some degree of autonomy. This included, for example, the Statistical Institute of Bulgaria. The foundation had written to this institute asking for data to be gathered in the region specifically on Gypsies. They received a lengthy reply that explained how this would not be possible given that they were short of available resources and such a project would be very costly. They claimed that a broad survey of the whole of Sofia was being planned for 1999 and that ultimately it was not just Gypsies who were suffering but the entire population of Bulgaria. Gueorgiev and the others were very cynical about this response, seeing it as yet another 'brush off'. While relatively powerless in these cases, in others, the Romani Bah Foundation were finding ways to actively resist the tendency for Gypsy NGOs to be pushed out of decision making bodies.

Their persistence in organising meetings with different members of the local authority was one of the ways they used their NGO to lobby state bodies and put pressure on local authorities. One such meeting was organised during my visit to the Foundation's office and was concerned with the question of electricity supply in Faculteta. This provided an example of their interaction with institutions which were more closely connected with state structures. Although the Electricity board had installed two transformers, Faculteta was at that time experiencing severe problems with electricity supply, with frequent power cuts. The meeting that the foundation had initially arranged never took place; the state representatives simply had not turned up. Gueorgiev therefore rescheduled it for the

following week. A day before this meeting they received a phone call from the Municipality of Sofia, who explained that they themselves could not be present, and that they would instead send over a representative from the International Department, who, of course, had no direct interest or influence in this matter.

Despite these obstacles, the meeting went ahead with members of the foundation, the Electricity Board, representatives from the International Department of the Municipality, Social Services and members of the Community Council. Its aim was to find ways of solving the problems of electricity in their quarter that would be mutually beneficial. However, it was made largely ineffective by the overall reluctance to co-operate on the part of the local authority representatives. They attempted to justify their refusal to provide an improved service by their claims that the inhabitants did not pay their bills. The foundation however, made the point that many houses in Faculteta were not fitted with electricity meters, which meant that inhabitants were often over-charged. But claims such as these were dismissed. It was obvious that the official representatives were not taking this meeting seriously, they were ill prepared, their contributions were superficial and they were eager to leave as soon as it was over. The other participants could not hide their frustration including the Bulgarian lawyer, who, together with Gueorgiev, felt it had been a total waste of time and believed that it may have caused more damage than good.

Finally, there were those actors who were much higher up within the state hierarchy, and in this case included the Chief of Social Services. A special meeting was arranged with the Chief of Social Services, which involved the director of the foundation, one of the lawyers and two other employees. It took place in the foundation's office, which in itself marked an important step towards encouraging greater co-operation between state officials and Gypsy communities. However, in this case this was as far as the co-operation went. The meeting was gridlocked by the stubborn refusal of the Chief of Social Services to co-operate. During the discussion he simply kept on repeating "I do not want to work with you". Given his relative importance within the state hierarchy such comments carried with them considerable weight. He explained that he had only come

here as a favour to the Gypsies of Faculteta, and had no intentions of negotiating any joint project with their foundation. He saw NGO projects as causing more harm than good in that they raised high expectations that could never be met. Nevertheless, those present put forward proposals such as the setting up of a bureau for Social Services in Faculteta. Complaints were also made about the high level of discrimination in the Social Services experienced by Gypsies. The Chief of Social Services however, declined any proposals and denied the existence of any major discrimination. As a result, no concessions were made on either side.

These relations with state officials at the various levels give some indication of the nature of the obstacles that this foundation as one concerned with Gypsies had to face. Relations with external bodies tended to rest upon the tension between, on the one hand, a new legal obligation on the part of state authorities to at least give the impression of co-operation with Gypsy communities, yet on the other hand, continued institutionalised discrimination and deep rooted prejudice. This was apparent across the board from high up within the state structure down to the attitudes of emergency services. NGOs like the Romani Bah Foundation, however, had no choice but to work within this new, albeit limited, scope for articulating social, cultural and political demands. The problems that this gave rise to were illustrated in the types of conflicts that emerged in response to the device of employing both Gadjo and Gypsy staff (seen as necessary for forging links with both sets of communities), as well as the complex mixture of compliance and resistance that characterised NGO-donor relations.

8.11 The hidden dimension

Rather than simply presenting evidence of 'good practice', the focus on this particular foundation offered a means to explore the hidden dimension left out by social exclusion theory. This did not always entail 'good practice' but, instead, consisted of a dual process of compliance and resistance in the articulation of evolving rights and changing identities on the part of those active within it. This case study is therefore important insofar as providing an example of how one particular type of Gypsy-led NGO worked.

Nevertheless, as part of the broader analysis it also gives some indication of the ways in which NGOs in general have been appropriated by the 'Gypsy elite' and extended to include local Gypsies from a variety of backgrounds. Furthermore, it highlights some of the ways in which social exclusion theory fails in its task of helping us to understand the core processes or situations it identifies.

The case study revealed a number of interesting questions about the extent to which different degrees of resistance and compliance could be detected in the day-to-day activities of a Gypsy-led foundation, most notably in terms of their project proposals, the organisation of conferences and meetings and their internal and external relations. These all point towards interesting sites of conflict, that far from indicating passivity, or isolation, represent the very stuff of proactive interaction between Gadjo and Gypsies, and between NGOs and state structures. This in itself highlights some of the difficulties that exist with the use of social exclusion theory, for such an approach can easily fail to account for the complex relations that tie groups dismissed as socially excluded to wider society and vice versa.

It was possible to argue that those Gypsies working for the foundation carried with them an awareness of and willingness to use existing strategies of survival within a public discourse of Western democracy. It was hoped that this would enhance moves for improving their position in society, whether it be through the promotion of social, human or employment rights. First, there was the employment of local Gypsies, such as the security officers who were known as the eyes and ears of the foundation. Together with builders and other members of staff, these locals worked alongside Gadjos and Gypsies from other neighbourhoods. This created the necessary direct link between the foundation and the community in terms of being able to tap into the 'grape vine' of the community, vital for the broadcasting of new information and for general awareness raising. The links were also important for the community members themselves who on a professional basis were in regular contact with 'outsiders'. The building of the foundation on existing community structures was therefore vital for both parties involved.

Second, were the politics of disguise and anonymity that often characterised Gypsy survival strategies in respect of community leadership and which were also a feature of this foundation. Gypsies in Bulgarian society as elsewhere are viewed as an indistinguishable mass. Indeed at a surface level and according to Bulgarian newspapers, there were very few discernible individuals within the Gypsy community who stood out.[26] Although not formally referred to as such, directors of Gypsy NGOs such as Gueorgiev, however, were proving to be important political leaders.

While constrained within the apolitical world of NGOs, Gypsy leaders were in real terms taking on broader political issues of Gypsy survival, which had no place in decision making in any formal sense. They could lobby and try to influence, but they did not necessarily have the legal basis or support to push this further. Resting on informal mechanisms of leadership was therefore paramount for NGO directors, such as Gueorgiev. This meant that those working for a NGO could pursue political interests without necessarily breaking legal codes. However, in Gueorgiev's case, his position as Gypsy leader was somewhat ambiguous. The location of his office in Faculteta and his concern with projects aimed directly towards it had, to a large extent, reinforced Gueorgiev's leader status within this community. However, at the same time his close ties with Faculteta served to weaken his position as leader among state officials. His 'anonymity' in this case proved an important source of self-protection at one level, yet at another hindered his credibility within official realms.

Third, was that despite the use of Bulgarian and English in more formal situations, they actively used the Romany language (or more specifically the Romany-Erlides dialect) in everyday transactions within the foundation and in communications with community members. This ran parallel with an overt expression of pride in Gypsy traditions of

[26] Such as Manush Romanov, a prominent Gypsy leader from the Communist era; Peter Gueugiev a BSP politician; and the Tsar Kiro (the Gypsy King). Reports of Tsar Kiro's activities are often found in Bulgarian newspapers, most of which paint a negative picture of him. For example "Gonyat Tsar Kiro ot kmetstvo v Plovdiv" (The persecution of Tsar Kiro by Plovdiv Municipality), *Standart,* 18 March 1997, which tells of his involvement in a semi-legal alcohol production 'scam'. Although he is far from a credible figure among the Gypsy communities in Bulgaria, he is still taken by the media as representative of them.

marriage, celebrations, music and skills, such as basket making. These were all features found in the office setting and incorporated into the working day.[27] This would become especially important when meetings with officials were held at the office. While they were there to discuss issues raised by the foundation, these state officials would also be confronted with popular images of Gypsy traditions. As discussed above this has implications for our understanding of their use of a public transcript to promote a hidden one; that is, of gaining support. Therefore it was possible to observe that traditional aspects of Gypsy cultural survival were placed alongside proposals that drew on liberal concerns of improving education and employment opportunities.

While not denying the importance for greater formal integration, their main concern was with finding ways to improve directly the living conditions and cultural autonomy of surrounding Gypsy communities. For example, their proposals for education reform and their focus on improving local schools, were rooted not so much in improving the vocational curriculum in order that Gypsies become more interested (often the focus of other NGOs), but in redressing the imbalance in education that systematically discriminated against them. This was evident in the type of proposals they put forward, such as a comparative study of schools in the locality. Through demonstration (they were partaking in university courses themselves), as well as through concrete project proposals, this foundation showed a commitment to promoting education not just as a tool for Gypsy survival, but for their equal participation in formal as well as informal societal structures.

The development of existing community networks, political anonymity, coupled with the persistence in the use of their own language and cultural traditions, helped to embrace more effectively interests and rights of Gypsies and in turn enhanced their work as a Gypsy-led foundation. Exploring the hidden dimension of the persistence of everyday survival strategies within the workplace, however, also had to account for the more

[27] On a number of occasions at the end of a working day Gypsy employees would turn up the music and start dancing and singing.

restrictive elements of various traditions. Maria, for example, had a very clear idea about the foundation and her role within it. She explained to me that in her view there were two main problems affecting Gypsies in Bulgaria. First, they did not know their rights, and that simply explaining these rights to them was not enough. Second, various traditions practised by Gypsy communities served to prevent many from demanding these rights. In particular, women were held back by expectations of marriage and family demands, which she herself had had to struggle with.[28] She saw the role of Gypsy NGOs as therefore being only ever limited. Even if Gypsy organisations were to all join together, they alone would not be enough to break the 'vicious circle'. Her own experience of having broken the mould at one level, yet still restrained at another, informed this rather more pessimistic perspective. One of the lawyers too, expressed that, in his experience, the problems faced by Gypsies were twofold, where he believed that factors specific to Gypsy traditions were just as restrictive as the structures within Bulgarian society.

The director however took a more optimistic view and believed that this foundation would be just one of the initial stages of a process that would end with the empowerment of Gypsy communities. Rather than merely an administrative service, he wanted this foundation to act as a transient mediator between Gypsy communities and local authorities, which in time would be rendered redundant. This was something he explicitly expressed and was also evident in his organisation of meetings and conferences involving both Gypsies and state representatives. While stressing the importance for increased co-operation between Gypsy communities, NGOs and state institutions, he also felt passionately about keeping alive the different cultural traditions among Gypsies. His work was therefore equally concerned with supporting various festivals and celebrations.

By carrying through existing survival strategies, adopting such mechanisms as the human rights approach and by leading a team of both Gypsies and Gadjos, this foundation was

---

[28] The gender constraints within Gypsy communities particularly for women in terms of marriage, the family and the taboo of menstruation have been explored by a number of scholars. See for example, Judith Okely, "Gypsy Women: Models in Conflict", in S. Ardener (ed.), *Perceiving Women*, Malaby, London, 1975; Carol Silverman, "State, Market and Gender Relations among Bulgarian Roma, 1970-90", *East European Anthropology Group*, Autumn, 14 (2) 1996; Stewart, *op. cit.*

helping in the process of making the NGO sector as useful a tool for Gypsies as it was for policy makers. Those active within it, whether they be the locals, or the Bulgarian lawyers, were increasingly forcing Gypsy issues onto the public agenda. At the same time the close co-operation between community members and outside actors as worked through by this foundation served to question fundamental assumptions about Gypsy-Gadjo relations. This rested on the use of Western oriented concepts, interpreted in such a way as to draw attention to structural obstacles to equality and which were then played back to the donors and wider society in an acceptable format. Rather than denying that Gypsies were marginalised *per se*, they used this terminology to address explicitly questions of poverty and official policy by challenging the usual premise of placing responsibility ultimately with Gypsies themselves. The overall emphasis was on building two-way relations between Gypsies and Gadjos. Although at a personal level this was posing some problems, at a symbolic and political level it seemed to represent an important breakthrough, most notably in terms of their relations with the lawyers.

8.12 Conclusions of the case study

This case study explored the extent to which there was compliance and resistance on the part of those involved in the NGO. It also addressed the nature of both the benefits and drawbacks experienced by those who appropriated conceptual frameworks such as human rights. It was possible at a number of levels to observe the interaction of informal wider survival strategies with the types of strategies adopted within the formal NGO sphere. Explicit examples were noted such as the employment of locals and the continued use of Romany language, coupled with more subtle strategies of playing up traditional Gypsy images. There was also an awareness on the part of the relevant staff of the need to deploy the correct terminology when applying for funds.

The use of the correct terminology went beyond just superficial insertion of phrases, however. Conceptual frameworks of human rights and integration fed into projects and into the very working ethos of the foundation. In the project 'Godi e Romenge', for example, human rights were adopted as a specific tool for providing information on

rights, legal advice and in many instances representing criminal cases. In this case, the recognition of Gypsy rights alongside those of human rights was of central importance. Likewise, the adoption of ideas of integration helped inform the working premise of having both Gypsies and Gadjo work together under a Gypsy leadership. Although there were problems at a personal level, symbolically at least this represented an important strategy for Gypsy survival in formal and political spheres.

The drawbacks of using such concepts, although less explicit, were of equal importance. In having to shape project proposals to suit specific agendas important elements of direct intervention could be lost. It was often the case that initial requests were asked to be re-worded or toned down. Ultimately, this case study showed that although foundations such as these were being used by its members in productive and challenging ways they were still having to operate within a particular framework shaped by the concerns of its donors. Therefore, although at one level it could be argued that like all those groups working within the NGO sector, Gypsies had access to a new set of potentially productive relations, at another level this foundation was not immune from the conflicts and the practical problems that underpinned it.

8.13 Problems of 'inclusion' and implications for social exclusion theory

The insights into some of the problems and prospects of Gypsies working within the NGO sector shed considerable light on to the complex question of social exclusion theory, and in particular its policy response of 'inclusion'. While the growing involvement of Gypsies in the Bulgarian NGO sector gives some indication of the extent to which this minority is already integrated into mainstream ideas of Bulgarian society, the nature of this involvement as one characterised by a small number of educated Gypsies, illustrates the way in which certain strands of Gypsy communities are more 'integrated' than others. Integration is not a static, nor indeed a linear process; it can take many forms according to position and context. It is certainly not a process to which only groups dismissed as 'excluded' or 'powerless' aspire.

Integration is a process that all members of society wish to partake in and often do so to varying degrees. Therefore, to see NGOs as an important means of 'inclusion' for groups traditionally defined as living outside of or detached from Bulgarian society serves to oversimplify and render meaningless this complex process. The instances of conflict and of co-operation that exist within and between Gypsy communities and NGOs show that this sector of Bulgarian society are very much intertwined into the complex dialectic of compliance and resistance that permeate societal relations in general.

Only a certain strand of Gypsies in Bulgaria had the inclination or ability to incorporate themselves into the NGO sector. Therefore it would be misleading to argue that all Gypsies were actively participating in formal aspects of transition. However, it would be equally dangerous to dismiss altogether the role of Gypsy survival strategies in formal processes. As with all members of society the degree and scope of participation for Gypsies as a whole is not uniform, and is at least partly determined by opposing factors of privilege and disadvantage. At the same time, this foundation employed inhabitants of Faculteta whose upbringing had been far from privileged. Employing locals was important for the foundation in terms of finding its place among the community and for tapping into traditional modes of communication. It was also important for the locals themselves, in that they had the opportunity to gain experience in and contact with formal state institutions. In this respect, the foundation represented a two-way process.

Rather than simply a means of inclusion, or integration for Gypsies the NGO sector can act as political shield for national and international policy makers to disguise the lack of adequate state policy in this area. The NGO rationale and structure in Eastern Europe therefore carried with it certain constraints and obstacles that prevented its use within the given context from penetrating too deeply the structural elements to inequality. Therefore, while it provided a legitimate space within which Gypsy actors could extend and develop existing survival strategies, at the same time its potential for radical change remained limited.

Ultimately, one of the main pivots of social exclusion theory is that groups like Gypsies are socially excluded because they lack for whatever reason the necessary criteria for full participation in mainstream society. These criteria range from, to name but a few, an education, a job, and good health, to a stable home and lifestyle. Their inclusion therefore requires that they learn the skills necessary for this criteria to be achieved, such as literacy or economic self-sustainability. This would then entail that they be better equipped to participate in and become accepted by mainstream society. However, it has become increasingly evident that the acquisition of such skills is not always a fair process nor does it achieve the intended results.

The adaptation of Gypsy communities to formal social structures has been central to their survival, whether it be in terms of securing wage based employment or a fixed abode. However, this has not always secured Gypsies automatic acceptance by dominant society. This was evident during the Soviet era, where the settlement and involvement of Gypsies in wage labour did not always translate into their harmonious integration. This is also proving to be the case during the transition, where 'new' entrepreneurial skills normally praised as important for an evolving market economy, are criticised when practised by Gypsies and taken as evidence of their corrupt nature.[29] Likewise, the participation of Gypsies in the NGO sector, and all the necessary skills associated with this, has not in itself always secured an acceptance on the part of local authorities to co-operate with them. The attitudes of Bulgarian citizens in general remained largely cynical of such NGOs, in that NGOs were seen as another example of a means of self-aggrandisement for the Gypsy elite. Popular stereotypes about 'rich Gypsies' were abundant and many people saw such stereotypes as confirmed by the growth in visible wealth associated with these NGOs.

The failure of Gypsies in general to fulfil the necessary criteria for inclusion is often interpreted as a product of their own 'backwardness', or 'deviancy'. This is a message

[29] For example, Yulian Konstantinov,"Hunting for Gaps Through Boundaries: Gypsy Tactics for Economic Survival in the Context of the Second Phase of Post-Totalitarian Changes in Bulgaria (1994-)", *Innovation*, 7 (3), 1994.

expressed not only through the media and on the street, but in professional situations, of which the meeting held between the Romani Bah Foundation and the Electricity board is just one example. Ultimately, the acquisition of the necessary skills are in themselves not always enough for those groups who are subject to structural and institutional oppression. Rather as a result of their own deficiencies, their deprivation is more a product of the structures of inequality that penetrate areas of schooling, work and cultural freedom, and that go much deeper than the symptoms relied upon in social exclusion theory. The idea of an at least partly self-induced phenomenon of social exclusion conveniently fixes Gypsies in their place and makes attempts at tackling poverty within this framework superficial. Ultimately, strategies of inclusion promote mainstream interests at the expense of more subtle but equally important survival strategies. Therefore, they not only fail to go far enough in tackling the causes of social inequality, but by doing so run the risk of reinforcing them.

The problems of inclusion as identified in this case study draw attention to some of the difficulties that exist with social exclusion theory. First of all, it was not apparent that groups who were defined as 'excluded' attached this label to themselves. Those working within the foundation for example recognised the self-perpetuating problems of the 'ghetto', but did so in specific terms that articulated the structural causes of such problems. Ultimately, references were made in project proposals and reports to ideas of social isolation and conversely participation in civil society, but as a necessary response to the use of these terms by national and international policy makers.

Second, the level of involvement of Gypsies in the NGO sector, coupled with the nature of their involvement, indicated that Gypsies during the transition were not necessarily isolated in the way that 'social exclusion' implies. Their concerns, like everyone else's, were with finding work, looking after the family and so forth. Third, and tied in with this, was the possibility of a 'hidden resistance' within the NGO sector, however subtle it may have been. This suggested that existing survival strategies were being used in such a way that contradicted ideas of 'social exclusion'. Isolated elements of resistance could easily

go unnoticed, such as their manipulation of certain concepts, or their playing up of popular Gypsy images. However, taken collectively and in conjunction with the formal defending of Gypsy rights, these apparently detached elements of resistance came together to form a coherent survival strategy of both compliance and resistance incorporated into the very ethos of the foundation.

However, it must also be acknowledged that this type of analysis carries with it a series of problems. In identifying realms of hidden resistance, one is forced to re-address accepted theories of power and hegemony. Tied in with this is the problem of to what extent it is justifiable to attach a label of 'resistance' to behaviour that is not acted out with any conscious intent to resist. The practical difficulties of outsiders gaining access to some authentic site of resistance has further undermined scholars to fully and conclusively resolve this theoretical dilemma. However, if we failed to recognise the resisting potential of Gypsies, in whatever form, then their contribution to and survival within wider society would be reduced to nothing more than mere passive and inconsequential, which, as this thesis clearly demonstrates, is not the case.

8.14 Conclusion

The case study, in conjunction with the wider analysis of the NGO sector in Bulgaria, helps us to take a step back from accepted wisdom and to identify the flawed assumptions that underpin current ideas and uses of social exclusion as a descriptive and analytical tool. Ultimately, the identification of a hidden dimension, whereby those within the foundation were playing with concepts imposed by the NGO structure and using them for practical ends, served to undermine the established view of Gypsies as victims and NGOs as the saviours.

Ultimately, for many NGOs led by Gypsies, there is a general cynicism expressed by members about application procedures, where a concern with abstract ideals of democracy and other similar values have to be clearly expressed in order to receive funding. Yet, they do have a genuine interest in promoting democracy and civil society, if

it means improving the lives of Gypsies. Resistance, therefore, is not explicit, but more implied through a general flexibility in cultural adaptation. It is also manifested in their commitment to basic Gypsy rights, such as persisting in the use of Romani language and promoting different aspects of Gypsy culture.

The participation of Gypsies within the NGO sector therefore represented a new form of 'incorporation' from below in that members of Gypsy NGOs may have complied with Western ideals at one level, but resisted them at another. The multiple identities that Gypsies have simultaneously taken on, as indeed everyone does, became particularly apparent within the NGO sector, where they were at once, 'Cigani', 'Romani' 'Bulgarian'/'Turkish' and 'aspiring Western'. Many NGOs were keen to promote civil society, democracy, and human rights in the Western sense, but the way in which these principles were interpreted and put into practice went beyond the limited Western NGO vision. Gypsy foundations incorporated 'Western' values but in such a way as to make them relevant to themselves both as Gypsies, as citizens of Bulgaria and as a minority of Europe.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

Given the huge scale of resources and energy being injected into policies aimed at tackling social exclusion at national and international levels, the thesis suggests the need for a more rigorous analysis of social exclusion theory. Fears over the increasing number and range of those experiencing poverty in all parts of Europe, especially since 1989, and its apparent manifestation in a cluster of certain 'social groups', have reinvested with a new sense of urgency and legitimacy once discredited ideas of deviancy and dependency. It has been argued in this thesis that the new concern with social exclusion is a product of such fears. In particular, it seems that social exclusion theory has come to represent the modern day catch-all euphemism for the 'dangerous classes' that have reappeared throughout modern history.[1]

The thesis, therefore, has attempted to critically examine the ideological roots to and implications of social exclusion theory in conjunction with NGO and resistance theories. It began by noting the rise in popularity and usage of social exclusion in national and international policy making, while at the same time observing its theoretical similarities to concepts of underclass, marginality and culture of poverty. In order to test the validity of social exclusion theory, the thesis then explored its 'Achilles heel', the NGO strategy of inclusion and, in particular, the emerging NGO sector during transition in Eastern Europe with special reference to Gypsies in Bulgaria. An analysis of the use of NGOs by Gypsy activists to enhance existing survival strategies formed the empirical core to my research. The results of the fieldwork indicated the possibility of a hidden dimension in which Gypsies both complied with and resisted to NGO and wider structures; a dimension left out by the dominant social exclusion approach towards Gypsies.

---

[1] Lydia Morris, *Dangerous Classes: The Underclass and Social Citizenship*, Routledge, London, 1994.

9.2 Problems of social exclusion theory

The thesis has argued that the redefinition of social inequality from an up-down analysis to one based on an in-out dichotomy has been in itself a top-down process whereby social policy makers and those in positions of power have shaped a new language of social exclusion. As a result, class analysis and its implications for understanding power relations, has not been replaced but subsumed into a broader social exclusion analysis based on a dichotomy of 'in/out'. This has had fundamental implications for the analysis of 'poverty groups' and questions of social agency. One of the main implications of adopting a one-dimensional framework in analysing severe cases of deprivation has been that it has often precluded a more thorough examination of the subtleties and causes of social inequality in both general and specific terms and has therefore proved conducive to generalisations implicit in government policy especially for those groups traditionally targeted such as Gypsies.

Expressed in neutral terms and framed within a 'politically correct' discourse of 'integration', 'human rights' and 'bottom-up participation', social exclusion as a policy oriented concept has successfully entered and taken a strategic place in mainstream social analysis and policy debate. As with existing theories of marginality, the underclass, and culture of poverty, dominant ideas within social exclusion theory are used to refer primarily to the *results* of a process, or the *situation* of those who are excluded, with little indication from what, or by what (or whom) they are excluded. Thus, as in the words of Messu, "making [exclusion] a quality in itself, a subjective characterisation, [which] is in a way to shift from the accident to the essence while at the same time erasing the circumstances which make the accident possible."[2] Strobel similarly argues that talking about social exclusion, is 'an old rhetorical device' that serves to naturalise the phenomenon and keep the poor quiet.[3] This is illustrated in the use of neutral or passive language to describe social exclusion as a phenomenon, or a combination of phenomena

---

[2] Messu, "Derégulation et Régulation Sociales: Contribution à l'Analyse Sociologique des Politiques Sociales", *Cahier de Recherches*, 51, CREDOC, 1993, quoted by Pierre Strobel, "From Poverty to Exclusion: A Wage Earning Society or a Society of Human Rights?", *International Social Science Journal*, 48 (2), 1996. p. 174.

[3] *Ibid.* Pierre Strobel is head of the research division of the Caisse Nationale des Allocations Familiales and a member of the European Observatory on National Family policies.

that has arisen from a series of external factors, such as the rapid pace of industrial and technological change, the evolution of changing family structures, or new forms of migration.[4]

The focus of social exclusion theory on a 'residual category' has allowed certain policy makers to deflect attention away from structural causes of inequality in other ways too. Although in many cases, measures of income inequality and poverty are still used for presenting levels of social inequality at the household level,[5] some critics have been alert to the dangers of social exclusion theory arguing that it is nothing more than "the latest euphemism for poverty."[6] The emphasis of social exclusion theory on 'new' poverty is especially problematic in the context of the 'transition' in Eastern Europe, where entrenched and rapidly expanding patterns of social inequality are dismissed as temporary or at best superficial.[7]

For users of social exclusion theory, solutions are sought more within the confines of the group in question and less so in terms of the societal context in which they exist. Explanations go so far as to identify a certain deficiency on the part of the group in question, such as a lacking in relevant life skills, legal rights, self-motivation, and so forth. In this way, disadvantaged groups, including ethnic minorities, are not only enclosed within a primarily *social* definition, but as a result are subject to a greater risk of stigmatisation. At the formal level, the deficiencies identified by policy makers are not necessarily portrayed as a direct fault of the group in question. However, the emphasis on social factors serves to deflect from focus possible causes of say class, race or gender inequality. Rather than directly challenging or attempting to dismantle such oppressive

---

[4] Katherine Duffy, *Social Exclusion and Human Dignity in Europe: Background Report for the Proposed Initiative by the Council of Europe*, Activity II 1b, Steering Committee on Social Policy, CDPS (95)1, 1995. p. 9. See also Commission of the European Communities, "The Community's Battle Against Social Exclusion", *European File*, 4, 1992.

[5] Such as R. Simpson and R. Walker, *Europe: For Richer or Poorer?*, Child Poverty Action Group, London, 1993; and Duffy, *ibid.*

[6] Q. Oliver (Secretary of the European Anti-Poverty Network) in the forward to Simpson and Walker, *ibid.* p. viii-ix. See also Strobel, *op. cit.* This was also a view widely expressed by members of the audience during a conference dedicated to the subject of social exclusion: *Social Exclusion and the City*, convened by Professor Chris Hamnett, Kings College London and the Royal Geographical Society, 29 October 1998.

[7] The rhetoric of 'transformation traps' is a classic example of this. Richard Portes, "Transformation Traps", *The Economic Journal*, 104, September, 1994.

structures, responses to social exclusion tend to rest upon the principle of finding ways to equip 'socially excluded groups' with the necessary skills for self-integration. This focus on social agency has most significantly informed NGO strategies of 'community development', 'bottom-up participation' and 'self-help', most prominently in the contexts of the 'developing' countries and most recently in the 'transition' countries.

An examination of the role of Gypsies within the Bulgarian NGO sector raised important points about both its possibilities and its detrimental implications for improving living conditions and legal rights of Gypsies as a whole. At one level, the simple inclusion of Gypsy rights into legal frameworks has yet to secure any profound social change. Simply including previously excluded groups into existing legal frameworks, without a radical re-working of existing assumptions, has not in itself served to liberate them, nor has it automatically secured them an equal status within society. Furthermore, as discussed in section 8 of Chapter 4, the concern on the part of Western policy makers in securing improved rights for Gypsies in Eastern Europe can be seen to be a product of much deeper fears about immigration.[8]

At another level, the creative use of human and minority right frameworks by Gypsies within the NGO sector indicates the potential that does exist within the NGO sector for 'bottom-up' contribution. However, the hidden dimension of compliance and resistance which characterised both the wider survival strategies of Gypsies and most notably their use of them within the NGO sector, suggest that the relationship between Gypsy NGO members and donors and in turn wider society is a vastly complex one, and one that remains unaccounted for in social exclusion theory. Ultimately, by removing from focus concepts of class inequality and poverty, national and international policy makers, when using social exclusion theory, run the risk of minimising the centrality of the context in which Gypsies operate. Therefore those who rely on ideas of social exclusion are less equipped to answer the question of why groups such as Gypsies remain worse off, yet

[8] See for example, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), "Roma (Gypsies) in the CSCE Region", *Report of the High Commissioner on National Minorities*, Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials, 21-23 September 1993.

organised, and why remedies, such as those proposed by NGOs, may at a surface level appear effective, but in reality serve only to negotiate rather than resolve a whole series of structural inequalities.

9.3 Methodological reflection

The distinct lack of reliable empirical data, the complexity of Gypsy problems and their responses, coupled with the unstable nature of the NGO sector, indicated to me the need to carry out fieldwork from the inside rather than relying solely on external methods of research. More specifically, the inside approach took a top-down perspective in that its prime focus was on the affluent and accessible world of NGOs. The complexities of this approach, however, coupled with the closeness of Gypsy communities, presented a series of methodological problems. Most significant was that, as a young Gadjo woman from the West, I was entering into a set of relations from primarily an outsider's position. In some circumstances this proved problematic in very explicit ways, in that I would be judged by some as primarily a non-Gypsy Westerner.

In other situations, however, my position as outsider was less problematic and at times even beneficial. On many occasions my investigation of NGOs at the ground level threatened to pull me into the politics and emotions that characterised this sector. However, as an outsider I could more legitimately than most remove myself from the heat of conflicts without undermining my own position. A clear example of this was when an argument concerning my arrival at a large Gypsy *mahala* broke out between the Mayor and my escort, a NGO leader. As discussed in section 9 of Chapter 6, the Mayor was reluctant for the NGO to intervene and disliked the fact that this NGO was showing me around. Rather than the blame being laid on me, however, the conflict essentially remained between themselves.

Ultimately, the juxtaposition of problems and benefits served to shed light on a number of important questions. First, there was the question of authenticity. In addressing the idea of both resistance and compliance on the part of those Gypsies working within the

NGO sector, it was necessary to question how far it was possible for me to gain access to this 'hidden dimension'. Carrying out formal and informal face-to-face interviews, coupled with participant observation in a number of settings, enabled me to a large extent to go beyond the 'NGO song' normally reserved for donors. However, when carrying out fieldwork by participant observation one must, of course, acknowledge the limitations to the depth of insight that is achievable at this level. Nevertheless, through extended contact I was able to get a sense of the overall expectations, hopes and fears of those working within the NGO sector. More specifically, this approach opened up potential for triangulation and the gathering of normally inaccessible documentation which, in conjunction with the use of existing data, enhanced rather than diminished the validity of this research.

Second, was the question of to what extent cultural practices, such as the use of the interview either constrained or opened up my research approach. The sometimes conflicting goals present at any one time during the interview, as well as the possible implications of my own particular status were factors that I explicitly considered during the analysis of my findings. The interviews were deliberately open-ended and loosely structured in order to allow for the interviewee to contribute to the form it would take. In some cases this led to a fruitful exchange, while in others it simply provided the interviewee a platform with which to report their 'successes'. I was therefore careful throughout to recognise the different contexts in which the interviews took place and to consider the implications this would have for its analysis.

Ultimately, the fieldwork and its use within a wider analytical framework opened up to question the extent to which statistics, whether they be qualitative or quantitative, were indeed reliable or valid for such a study. However, by explicitly combining the use of both official and non-official statistics with my own findings, the thesis aimed to present focused data within the wider context and to apply them to ideas of social exclusion, resistance and NGOs.

9.4 Summary of main findings

Taking these methodological reflections into consideration I return to the questions posed in chapter 1 as a means to summarise the main findings of this thesis. First, how successfully does social exclusion theory help us to understand the core processes or situations it identifies, i.e. has it been correct in its prognosis that groups will perpetuate their own poverty and isolation if not given access to mainstream societal institutions? Second, does social exclusion theory account for the contradictions that are emerging in terms both of resistance and participation on the part of those groups defined as excluded?

An analysis of the function of NGOs for Gypsies in the Bulgarian context was central to both these questions. In seeking to explain and account for the existence of a 'residual' minority, and by not recognising the important role 'socially excluded' groups play in their own survival (however far from the 'norm' such strategies may be), social exclusion theory helps us to understand only to a limited extent the core process and situations it identifies. In contrast to ideas of 'isolation' and 'detachment' that underpin the use of social exclusion theory, my findings show how Type B NGOs in particular were keen to use the evolving third sector for specific ends. In Bulgaria it was generally educated and already politically active Gypsies who were taking the leading role in their niche of the NGO sector. However, there was also evidence that local Gypsies were being employed and so drawn into the process both separately and in partnership with non-Gypsies. Therefore, in spite of the constraints inherent to the donor framework, these NGOs seemed to have taken the third sector as a tool for both compliance and resistance in order to maximise its benefits for both short term relief and more sustained strategies of long term improvement.

Within their overall strategies, ideas of integration were not rejected *per se* but redefined. Human rights for example were taken on board not so much as the answer but as a means to pursue political ends, such as awareness raising or highlighting and bringing to justice

perpetrators of institutionalised anti-Gypsy violence. Yet, underpinning this discussion has been the recognition that the NGO sector as a strategy of inclusion is beset with problems both in general terms and with specific reference to Eastern Europe. While revealing flaws in the NGO structure, the problems experienced by Gypsies in terms of their relations with the donors and state actors also highlights the problematic assumptions that underpin it. First, there is its contradictory claim on the one hand of providing a viable alternative to state structures, yet on the other offering only limited funding. Second is its claim of representing and including the interests and rights of minority groups, yet still at the most basic level operating within, rather than against the constraints of continued structural inequality.

The evolution of the NGO sector in post 1989 Bulgaria, as indeed across Eastern Europe, has therefore been swift but shallow. Whereas the number of registered foundations and organisations have increased dramatically, the figures for those in receipt of regular funding is less impressive. Furthermore, the high participation rate of ethnic minorities has been taken as an indication of the importance of NGOs despite the fact that the composition of those groups involved tends to be restricted to a certain strand of individuals. Ultimately, the nature of the relationship that has subsequently been forged between the international donors and the Gypsy related foundations at the ground level indicates how the NGO sector for Gypsies is at once restrictive and enabling. That the NGO sector during the transition has developed into a site of both conflict and incorporation for many Gypsies raises the possibility that 'incorporation from below' has formed an important post-1989 Gypsy survival strategy both within this sector and the wider context.

Given these findings, it is therefore possible to substantiate the hypotheses proposed at the beginning of the thesis. First, the overall continued survival of Gypsies as a distinct ethnic group, coupled with the active self-organisation of educated Gypsies within the NGO sector, reveals that Gypsies are not by definition isolated, passive nor de-politicised. Second, the strategy of inclusion for Gypsies in Eastern Europe through the

NGO sector is a vastly complex procedure, which at the formal level holds within it both the potential for effective bottom-up integration as well as continued top-down assimilation. Third, those Gypsies involved within the NGO sector have been able to 'manipulate' NGO rhetoric and develop strategies for survival that rest on aspects of both compliance and resistance. Finally, theories of social exclusion do not adequately account for the experiences of Gypsies in Bulgaria. The latter point in particular was taken as of central importance given that the purpose of the thesis was to test the validity of social exclusion theory in addressing questions of inequality and resistance for Gypsies in Bulgaria.

9.5 The implications of this critique for the model of social exclusion itself

This thesis, by showing how Gypsies are not only intertwined into the very workings of wider society, but that society itself is built on a series of fundamental inequalities reveals how terms of 'integration', 'community development' and 'human rights' as used in NGO and social exclusion theories are more problematic than they may appear at first sight. In many respects these primarily Western discourses serve to shield the often ethnocentric and ideological biased interpretation of Gypsy responses during the transition. The use of the social exclusion framework to analyse inequality fails to challenge the popular held view that those groups or individuals who do not collude with accepted ideas of behaviour and work patterns must somehow be deviant, or at best deficient.

Both the informal and formal responses of Bulgarian Gypsies during the 'transition' demonstrate that as a group they occupy a specifically disadvantaged place within society. As we have seen Gypsy populations on the whole do experience higher levels of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and ill-health than their co-habitants. But is it a question of social exclusion? At one level their condition as a whole could be described as isolated, in that they do not in general comply with, nor indeed have access to formal societal institutions, whatever form they may take. However, at another level there are a number of problems with the social exclusion approach.

First, it fails to address the complexity of Gypsy cultures and ethnic groupings in that some are clearly more integrated than others. Gypsies in Bulgaria, like all groups in any given country, are made up of a multitude of different communities and are part and product of the society they live in. Second, the idea of social exclusion fails to acknowledge that Gypsies have influenced and been influenced by their society to varying degrees in terms of economic activities, politics and culture.

Ultimately social exclusion theory can be used to address specific examples of exclusionary policies in terms of denied access to different arenas of activity, whether it be decision-making or legal rights. However, to argue that reversing these specific processes will solve the entire problem of poverty and inequality through strategies such as those proposed by the NGO sector is missing the point. The label of social exclusion therefore does not necessarily help *explain* the reason for their predicament and allows us to only go so far in our analysis and understanding of social inequality. Ultimately, for those groups who are subject to varying degrees of institutionalised oppression, the condition of isolation or 'social exclusion' may be just one of a whole series of symptoms that they experience, not necessarily the definitive one. If social exclusion is taken, therefore, as a general theory of inequality, those who use it serve only to limit their own analysis.

9.6 The implications of this critique for Gypsies and the NGO sector in Eastern Europe

Ultimately, social exclusion and its strategy of inclusion can, like similar theories before it, serve to negate 'other' values and cultures. The main implication of this critique for our understanding of Gypsies therefore is that individually, or as a group, they are not necessarily, nor want to be labelled as socially excluded. In terms of their role within the NGO sector, the critique of social exclusion draws attention to some of the more fundamental problems associated with the strategy of 'inclusion'. Problems associated with Gypsies and the NGO sector (especially during the transition in Eastern Europe) are acknowledged to some extent by some Western commentators and NGO leaders

themselves, insofar as to address problems with NGO practice. Rather than leading to a useful re-evaluation of the basic premise of 'inclusion', however, such problems are discussed at only a surface level and in terms of having to undergo a learning curve.

In contrast, the thesis demonstrates that the problems encountered by Gypsies in the NGO sector are not so much a product of factors such as under-funding, but are tied into the very assumptions that underpin it, in terms of its own role and that of Gypsies. This is not to deny that the NGO sector, both as an alternative to the state in terms of welfare provision, and as a source of bottom-up agency, is plagued with structural and organisational problems. Instead it suggests that what should be most significant is the question of its strategy of inclusion, in that it rests upon the assumption that there are 'excluded' groups waiting to be 'included'. This assumption fails to recognise the persistent and creative range of survival strategies on the part of Gypsies which demonstrate their implicit unwillingness to accept the logic of social exclusion theory (i.e. that they are powerless and isolated).

The identification of a possibly hidden transcript within the Bulgarian NGO sector that corresponds with wider survival strategies for Gypsies, reveals the dimension that social exclusion theory fails to consider. The case study described in Chapter 8, as part of the wider analysis, showed that the label of 'social exclusion' for Gypsies in Bulgaria is inappropriate and misguided in that like any other members of society during transition, Gypsies are trying to make the most of what little they have. In the case of Bulgaria during the transition, the NGO sector is one of the few resources open to Gypsies, who, on their part, have been finding ways where possible to take full advantage of it. Whether or not we attach the label of resistance to the activities of Gypsies within the NGO sector, does not detract from the reality that they are creatively using existing survival strategies, in spite of the constraints imposed on them by wider society and the NGO sector itself.

The NGO sector should not be taken as a solution to problems of 'social exclusion', for its emphasis on participation and inclusion as a source of empowerment precludes the

tackling of deeper structural cases of inequality, such as the unequal distribution of resources. Strategies of inclusion therefore only go some way to dealing with problems of poverty and deprivation. Rather than proposing that it be abandoned altogether, however, this thesis suggests that the NGO strategy should be recognised for what it is: one type of policy response open to a limited sector of society that is dominated by external donors.

A fair and useful analysis of Gypsies during the transition needs to begin with the dimension that social exclusion leaves out, that is, Gypsies both in wider society, but most significantly within the NGO sector, simultaneously comply and resist. This dialectical tension that Gypsies and wider society maintain with each other demonstrates that far from being passive victims, Gypsies are agents of their own survival, not of their own oppression.

Ultimately, the theory of social exclusion needs to be radically re-worked and its limitations acknowledged if it is to be of any use for our understanding of social inequality. Rather than as a generic conceptual tool, social exclusion should instead be used for a specific analysis of certain symptomatic aspects of structural inequality. In addressing the causes of social inequality even in terms of its broader aspects of deprivation and in articulating a subsequent course of action, a focus on the systematic reproduction of the forms of class inequality and traditional measurements of poverty are just as vital today as they ever have been.

APPENDIX 1

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN BULGARIA 1989-1997

10 November 1989	Zhivkov and the Bulgarian Communist Party removed from power. Introduction of democratic elections.
1990	Formation of ROMA and establishment of 3 Gypsy MPs within the BCP.
10 June 1990	Reformed Communists won overall majority in national elections.
July 1990	The Democratic Roma Union, an organization which defends the social, cultural and political rights of Gypsies, was denied recognition as a political party. The Supreme Court upheld the decision.
1991	Changes introduced in Constitutional law and introduction of the law on Political Parties, which prohibits the establishment of political parties based on religious or ethnic grounds. Freedom of expression, including in the media, has been guaranteed in Articles 39, 40 and 41. However stringent restrictions remain.
November 1992	A police attack on a Gypsy neighbourhood in Pazarzhik occurred. Medical professionals refused to provide Gypsies with the documents they needed after the attack to substantiate their injuries, making it difficult for the victims to seek redress. Gypsies also found it impossible to obtain lawyers to plead their cases.
April 1993	More than 50 police officers forcibly entered a number of houses without search warrants in the Gypsy community in the town of Novipazer in search of suspected criminals. Witnesses reported that the police indiscriminately beat men, women and children of the Gypsy community.
February 1994	The 1993 U.S. State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices reported an increase in human rights violations, xenophobia, nationalism and anti-ethnic expression against Gypsies in Bulgaria in 1993. They also reported that there were few government investigations of these incidents. These incidents included: Gypsies being beaten by skinheads and other racist groups; unsubstantiated reports of police sexually abusing Gypsy minors; and difficulties for Gypsies in applying for social benefits.[1]

[1]Jonathan Fox, *Roma (Gypsies) in Bulgaria*, web site <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/ cidcm/mar/bulroma.htm>, (106) 1/10/95, update 12/4/95, (accessed June 1997).

1994	The Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), a political party that unofficially expresses the interests of Bulgarian Muslims and Turks, was the third largest party represented in the Bulgarian parliament.
October 1994	The National Assembly was dismissed and parliamentary elections were prepared for December.
18 December 1994	Parliamentary elections: Bulgarian Socialist Party (a reformed BCP) won an overall majority - led by Mr. Zhan Videnov. He remained in power throughout 1995. During this time there were no changes made to the constitutional or political framework.
1995	No international human rights instruments were ratified during 1995. The BSP refused to sign the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. They justified this, unofficially, with the impermissibility of the use of a minority language during contacts with the administrative authorities (under Art.10, part 2 of the Convention), as well as the inadmissibility of the option to re-name traditional areas, streets and other landmarks in the language of the minority in areas where they constitute a substantial number (guaranteed under Art.11, part 3 of the Convention).
March 1995	The only discriminatory law on 'decommunization' was repealed. This law had been introduced to expel certain individuals from the managing bodies of academic and research institutions on grounds of links with former regime.
15 March 1995	The 1994 U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices noted that in Bulgaria: there were allegations of police abuse of Roma during 1994; there was an increase in attacks against Roma by private citizens, especially skinheads; the government's Ministry of Education continued its programme to introduce Roma language textbooks and provide Roma language training for teachers in schools with Roma children; and some Roma policemen were hired in some villages.
May 1995	Amendments were made to the Penal Code and Penal Procedural Code. The Penalty 'life imprisonment' was introduced (but without abolishing capital punishment).

June 1995	The government issued a decree to close down the Interdepartmental Council on Ethnic Affairs - the only state body that represented issues concerning ethnic minorities. It was replaced by the National Council on Social and Demographic Issues. This is a consultative body which brings together issues of ethnic minorities with those of women, pensioners, invalids, and the disabled. Only those organisations with structures in more than a third of the municipalities across Bulgaria were recognised as having access to this council.
29 October 1995	Local government elections - BSP gained majority.
October-November 1996.	Peter Stoyanov elected as President.
January 1997	Student protests against the BSP.
April 1997	Parliamentary elections, UDF won overall majority.
9 October 1997	The UDF signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS No. 157). It had been open for signature from 1 February 1995, and so represented one of the few countries left within the Council of Europe to reach this stage. However, by the end of 1997, the government had not yet ratified it. Furthermore, the Bulgarian government, unlike in Croatia, Hungary, Romania and Slovenia, had yet to sign the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (ETS No. 148), which had been open for signature since 5 November 1992.

APPENDIX 2

NGOS IN BULGARIA AND INTERVIEWS

Composition of NGOs registered with Union of Bulgarian Foundations and Associations (March 1997)

Field of interest	Number	%
Culture	148	13.5
Professional Associations	122	11.2
Education	98	9
Health	95	8.7
Nature/Environment	91	8.3
Miscellaneous	85	7.8
Socially Disadvantaged	79	7.2
Democracy/civil society/ Human Rights	72	6.6
Foreign Relations	68	6.2
Economic/Business	44	4.2
Youth	35	3.2
Gypsies/Roma	30	2.7
Regional development	30	2.7
Social/political research	29	2.7
Minorities	23	2.1
Women	21	1.9
NGOs	17	1.6
Anti-Drugs	7	0.6
TOTAL	1094	100

Examples of NGOs in Bulgaria working with Gypsies: Date of registration and of interviews (based on interviews carried out in 1997)

NGO Type A

(1) Confederation of Roma in Bulgaria, Sofia (1993)* 4.3.97
(2) Roma Foundation, Rousse (1996) 12.3.97
(3) Balkan Foundation for Cross Cultural Education and Understanding Diversity, Sofia (1997) 17.3.97 and 11.9.97
(4) "Justice 96" Society, Plovdiv (1997) 17.10.97
(5) Youth Initiative for Tolerance, Sliven (1997) 20.10.97
(6) United Roma Union, Sliven (1992)* 20.10.97
(7) Foundation "New Life for Bulgarian Roma" Sliven (1994)* 21.10. 97
(8) Roma Foundation 'Hope', Sliven (1996) 22.10.97
(9) Foundation "Women for Mercy - Roma", Sliven (1995) 22.10.97

NGO Type B

(1) Human Rights Project, Sofia 17.3.97
(2) Bulgarian Helsinki Committee - Foundation Romani Bah, Sofia (1995) 17.9.97
(3) Foundation for Regional Development - Self Help Bureau 'Roma', Plovdiv (1995)* 29.9.97
(4) Social Foundation 'Roma', Plovdiv (1992)* 1.10.97
(5) 'Roma' Women Association, Plovdiv (1995)* 18.10.97
(6) National Association of Roma Organisations and Foundations, Sliven (1997) 20.10.97

NGO Type C
(1) Foundation "United Ethnos", Rousse (1996) 11.3.97
(2) Partners for Democratic Change, Sofia 18.3 97 and 23.10.97
(3) Open Society Foundation, Sofia (1990) 31.10.97

NGO Type D
(1) CEGA (Creating Effective Grass roots Alternatives), Sofia (1995) 18.3.97
(2) Free and Democratic Bulgaria, Sofia 19.3.97
(3) The International Centre for Minority Studies and Inter Cultural Relations, Sofia (1992) 16.9.97
(4) Inter Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights, Sofia (1994) 18.9.97
(5) Bulgarian Red Cross, (1878), Sofia: 19.9.97, Plovdiv: 7.10.97
(6) Journalists for Tolerance Foundation, Plovdiv (1996)* 8.10.97
(7) Foundation 'Understanding', Plovdiv (1995)* 16.10.97

** Those registered with the Union of Bulgarian Foundations and Associations.*

Other interviews:
G. Ivanova, Director of Special School 10.3.97
A. Kememedchiev, Prison Officer 21.10.97
R. Ninchova, Social Services 24.10.97
Major K. Kararadev, Police Officer 21.10.97
D.Dobdrev, Secretary State of the Municipality 22.10.97
The Head of the Public Council, Sliven 23.10.97
N. Hubanov, Administrative Representative for Nadejhda 23.10.97.
Angul, farmer and project coordinator, 9.10.97
Marushiakova and Popov, first interview 19.3.97 and many others thereafter.

APPENDIX 3

A TABULATION OF GYPSY RELATED NGOS

Table 1 Type A

	Aims	Approach	Rep-orts	Sources of funding
	NGO Type A			
1.	To provide social, cultural and material support.	Nurturing Gypsy representatives, promotion of cultural events.	No	Council of Europe, OSCE
2.	To offer immediate relief to poverty.	Charitable: donating money and clothes.	No	Private sources
3.	To include Gypsy children into Bulgarian schools; to strengthen bilingual abilities of minority children; to strengthen NGO links nationally and internationally.	Working with schools, comparing results and publishing findings; developing and publishing Gypsy centred textbooks and teaching manuals.	Yes	A Dutch Foundation
4.	To treat all ethnic groups equally to bring together all NGOs working with minorities; to target children and help them go to school.	Repairing the local kindergarten; help pay taxes; training single mothers (in retailing etc.) giving advice in different social areas; organising seminars.	No	Novib
5.	To support young people of all ethnic groups, their talents and education; for Gypsies to enter schools equally.	Apply for funding; training for foundations, help pay taxes, encourage learning of Bulgarian, involve parents as volunteers; provide text books, breakfasts.	y No	Potential: OS, Democratic Network, Foreign Embassies, Fergo, Union of Bulgarian Foundations.
6.	To safeguard rights and interests of Gypsies; to support the integration of Gypsies into wider society; to change thinking of Gypsies and of the majority; priority is education and to prevent discrimination.	Est. of Bureau for Mutual Help; creating employment opportunities; encouraging children to attend school; distributing food at schools; celebrating Gypsy cultural events, publication of Gypsy newspaper.	Yes	Novib, Soros, Programme Democracy Network, Foundation for the Dev. of Civil Society, GB Council, Int. Centre Supporting Minorities, and businessmen.
7.	To support Gypsies in all fields and their integration as an ethnic group into wider society; emphasis on children.	Organising mutual training seminars in human rights for all minorities; acting as a mediator bet. police /exec. power and Gypsies; working with the media; providing textbooks, clothes.	No	Sponsored by the Euro Commission, Union of Bulgarian Foundations, also Soros, Open Educ, Democratic Network.
8.	To help Gypsies who have suffered most by working in every field, to set up an office like the Bureau for Mutual Help.	Improving learning facilities for Gypsies, providing books/ food, running seminars, making existing social clubs function.	No	International Minority Centre
9.	To support families and children in the areas of health, education and social support, to fight for the women's spirit, to understand reasons behind low school attendance.	Improving qualifications and employment opportunities; prov emergency relief not just for Gy carrying out research, organising meetings bet. NGOs, specialists state structures.	-	Charity Know How Danish Embassy.

Table 2 Type B

	Aims	Approach	Rep-orts	Sources of funding
	NGO Type B			
1.	To monitor human rights abuses, empower Gypsies to protect their and political rights.	Offering legal advice, providing and/or hiring of lawyers to defend Gypsy clients. Training Gypsies for journalism and management, publicising HR abuses.	Yes	Sponsorship from Phare and Euroma for specific projects Individuals, US N/GOs, German Marshall Fund.
2.	To provide information to Gypsies so they can act for themselves, to win the confidence of community and develop relations with state institutions.	Promotion of education and improvement of local school; legal consultation; advice and help with social assistance; life saving vouchers for medical costs.	Yes	Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, Charities and Foundations, ERRC; The American Center, GB Embassy.
3.	To provide social assistance and protect civil rights of Gypsy population; raise social status of Gypsies; to attract children back to school and help everyone within community regardless of ethnicity.	Fund raising; prioritisation of education; setting up a collective bank; operation of 3 sections: women, youth and social work. Offering moral and financial support to single unemployed mothers; paying kindergarten fees, providing food and clothing, running youth club.	Yes	Novib, CEGA, Soros, American Cultural Center.
4.	To help those Gypsies most in need, to preserve self-awareness, to fight discrimination. Major issues are land, housing, and advocacy of civil rights.	Help with securing land at a lower price, putting sustained pressure on local authorities; providing admin., legal and technical help, helping new NGOs.	-	Democratic Committee of US Embassy.
5.	To provide a bridge between Bulgarian and Gypsy women; to support disadvantaged families and talented children.	Providing food at local nursery,giving advice on health, social and legal problems, working with drug addicts and glue sniffers, org. of preparatory class.	-	Red Cross, Inter-Ethnic Initiative, Factories in Plovdiv and Sofia regions, Democracy Network, US N/GOs.
6.	To unite Gypsy NGOs and work together to solve bigger problems	Training seminars on how to write projects and lead NGOs, building network between foundations.	No	GB Embassy, Union of Bulgarian Foundations, OS, St.C and T Foundation, Association of Children at Risk.

Table 3 Type C

	Aims	Approach	Rep-orts	Sources of funding
	NGO Type C			
1.	To provide support and assistance to Gypsies and other ethnic groups; awareness, help develop Gypsies via education and cultural projects.	Emphasise education, promotion of cultural events, vocational training, liaise with government and state institutions.	No	Sponsorship from international organisations.
2.	To integrate minorities among themselves and into mainstream society, to promote civil society.	Conflict resolution and business mediation setting up community dialogues, with participation from all ethnic groups; co-operation with state authorities.	Yes	US funding.
3.	To support civil society in Bulgaria promote cultural values of different groups; integrate the Gypsy community into modern Bulgarian society and to protect the rights of its members.	Facilitate international and educational contacts; support education (special classes); cultural, economic development, institutional support for Gypsy NGOs, University grants for Gypsy students, regional information and advisory centres: Open Society clubs.	Yes	Soros.

Table 4 Type D

	Aims	Approach	Rep-orts	Sources of funding
	NGO Type D			
1.	To encourage civil participation for all minorities; to identify needs, funds and offer proposals for projects with partner Gypsy organisations.	Working with Gypsy NGOs, not directly with Gypsy communities; setting up self-help groups, training programmes and legal advice centres.	Yes	Novib.
2.	To facilitate the establishment of a civil society.	Establishment of a street children project, providing immediate relief, a day centre and night shelter, offers also counselling and schooling.	Yes	Private/ international sources, EC Phare-Lien, Soros.
3.	To be a research centre for all minorities, to work with Gypsy NGOs; main concern is education, to create a Gypsy intelligentsia, to promote Gypsy culture.	Working from pre-school age up to higher education providing grants in all fields, enabling Gypsies to study abroad, special classes in drama etc.; paying taxes, giving aid to kindergartens; publishing Gypsy poetry and newspapers.	Yes	Centre for Study of and Christian-Muslim Relations U, Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, UK, Soros, UNESCO, UK Foreign Office.
4.	Promotion of education, culture, tolerance and respect for ethnic groups, to contribute to harmonious inter ethnic relations via participation of excluded groups in human rights and the development process.	Sustainable local development, design and publication of Gypsy textbooks, teaching manuals and tapes, seminars, anti-ghetto projects, content analysis of media, launching of magazine and radio programme, training police.	Yes	Bilance (a Dutch foundation funded by Dutch government and Catholic Church), Phare, Westminster for Democracy, MRG.
5.	To relieve the most vulnerable of those neglected by state institutions: the elderly and disabled; student families; minorities. To advance democratic values and civil development.	Charity activities, e.g. provision of soup kitchens for pupils with coupons, distribution of clothes and shoes, working through Gypsy NGOs, organising public events, support of social welfare institutions.	Yes	Red Cross international framework, Individuals, Bulgarian and US N/GOs.
6.	To raise awareness and promote tolerance.	Publication of newsletter with articles on minority issues, the setting up of a radio station on minority issues.	Yes	Novib, Netherlands Organisation for International Development Co-op, Democracy Network.
7.	To search for solutions for all socially disadvantaged groups through cross cultural co-operation.	Intercultural understanding, conflict resolution, consultancy; advice on social services; seminars for y.p., encouraging newspapers to publish positive features on minorities, cultural events.	Yes	Soros, Phare, Foundation for the Development of Citizens (Bulgarian NGO), Pew Charitable trust (US), Red Cross.

APPENDIX 4

AN ANCIENT STORY

Once upon a time there was a Rom. He wanted to become rich. One day he arrived in town. He walked and walked, he sought and sought, but nowhere was there any good work. He was seized by a great hunger, because he had not eaten since morning. He sees: [a] Gadjo is selling loaves of flat bread, and the people have stopped buying them. He went to the Gadjo and told him:

- Listen to what I tell you. I will start calling and urging the people and when they buy all your flat bread. I will have one for free.

- Very well - said Gadjo.

And he was able to shout very loudly. The people started buying the flat bread and it sold quickly. The Gypsy looked - only one was left.

- Well, look here - he said - all bread has been sold, one is left and I will take it for free.

But Gadjo is very stingy.

- I will not give you a flat bread for free, get out of here!

- E-e-e - the Gypsy thought -I will give you a lesson.

He turned his fur coat with the lining out, blackened his face, put horns on his hair. And he went down the road to the Gadjo and began to shout, to bleat like a he-goat, to bark like a dog, to crow like a rooster, to grunt like a sow. The Gadjo was seized by a great fear. He threw away his money bag and ran away. And the Gypsy took the money, and went back home and became rich.

This is a story recorded in its original folklore form by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov (eds.), *Studii Romani*, Vol.II, Club '90 Publishers, Sofia, 1995.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

1. OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS: INTERNATIONAL

United Nations

United Nations (UN), *The Main Types and Causes of Discrimination*, sales no. 49. XIV. 3, New York, 1949.

UN, *World Economic and Social Survey - Trends and Policies in the World Economy,* New York, 1996.

UN/DESIPA and UN Economic Commission for Europe, *Economic Survey of Europe 1995-1996.*

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, *Homepage*, <http.//www.unece.org/ead/pub/survey.htm> (accessed November 1998).

United Nations Children's Fund

Komitetat sa United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), *Natsionalen analis na problemite na Bulgarskoto dete i bulgarskoto semejstvoto*, Sofia, 1991.

UNICEF, Zamfir, Elena and Catalin Zamfir, *The Romany Population - Socio-Economic Situation*, Series: Social Policy No. 8, UNICEF, Bucharest, January 1993.

UNICEF, *Poverty, Children and Policy: Responses for a Brighter Furture*, Economies in Transition Studies, Regional Monitoring Report, No. 3, 1995.

UNICEF, *Children at Risk in Central and Eastern Europe: Perils and Promises*, Economies in Transition Studies, Regional Monitoring Report, No. 4, 1997.

UNICEF, *Education for All?* The MONEE Project CEE/CIS/Baltics, Regional Monitoring Report, No. 5, 1998.

United Nations Development Programme

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Bulgaria: Human Development Report*, Sofia, 1995.

UNDP, Massey, Ruth, *Living with Transition,* A pamphlet by the United Nations Development Programme, 1995.

UNDP, The Role and Function of National Human Development Reports (NHDR), 1996 Web site <http://www.undp.org/hdro/> (accessed July 1997).

UNDP, *Sofia - Human Development Report*, UNDP, Sofia, 1997.

UNDP, *National Human Development Report Bulgaria 1998: The State of Transition and Transition of the State,* United Nations Development Project, Sofia, 1998.

United Nations Human Rights Commission on Refugees

United Nations Human Rights Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), Braham, M. *The Untouchables - A Study of the Roma People of Central and Eastern Europe,* A Report to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 1993.

UNHCR, *Background Paper on Romanian Refugees and Asylum Seekers*, Centre for Documentation on Refugees, Geneva, November, 1994.

World Bank

World Bank (WB), *World Development Report 1990: Poverty,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990.

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), *Bulgaria Crisis and Transition to a Market Economy*, Vols. I and II, A World Bank Country Report, Washington D.C., 1991.

WB, *Social Indicators of Development,* A World Bank Book, World Bank, London, 1995.

WB, *From Plan to Market,* World Development Report, Washington D.C. 1996

WB web page, <http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/offrep/eca/bgrcb.htm> (accessed September 1997).

WB Group web site entitled "For Non-governmental Organizations/Civil Society", <http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/forngovs/htm> (accessed January 1999)

International Monetary Fund

International Monetary Fund (IMF), *Bulgaria - Recent Economic Developments,* IMF Staff Country Report, No. 96/13, February 1996.

IMF, *World Economic Outlook*, World Economic and Financial Surveys, Washington, May 1996.

2. OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS: EUROPEAN

European Union

European Union, *The EU Encyclopaedia and Directory*, Europa Publications, London, 2nd edition, 1996.

Commission of the European Communities

Commission of the European Communities (CEC), Liégeois, Jean Pierre, "School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children - A Synthesis Report", *Commision of the European Communities,* 1987.

CEC, *Towards a Europe of Solidarity, Intensifying the Fight Against Social Exclusion, Fostering Integration*, COM (92) 542, 1992.

CEC, "The Community's Battle Against Social Exclusion", *European File*, 4, 1992.

CEC, *Draft Report on Gypsies in Europe: The Role of Local and Regional Authorities*, Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, 28th Session, CPL (28) 10 Part II rév. Strasbourg, 15 April 1993.

CEC, Millan, Bruce (ed.), *Europe 2000+ - Cooperation for European Territorial Development*, Luxembourg, 1994.

CEC, *European Social Policy - A Way Forward for the Union,* Vols I and II, White Paper, COM (95)94 final.

CEC, *School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children*, Brussels, COM (96) 495 final, October 1996.

European Commission

European Commission (EC), *Social Protection in Europe,* 1995.

EC, *The European Union's Phare and Tacis Programme: Micro Projects in Operation*, 1995.

EC, "Big Bosses Act Against Exclusion", *Social Europe Magazine,* 1, September, 1995.

EC, *Digest of Community Resources Available for Financing the Activities of NGOs and Other Governmental and/or Decentralised Bodies Representing Civil Society in the Fields of Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid.* VIII/207/97 EN, 1997.

EC, *Evaluation of the Phare and Tacis Democracy Programme - 1992-1997,* ISA Consult; European Institute, University of Sussex; GJW Europe, 1997.

Council of Europe

Council of Europe (CoE), *Gypsies in the Locality*, Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1994.

CoE, *Street Children - Study Group on Street Children*, Steering Committee on Social Policy, Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1994.

CoE, *Human Rights, A Continuing Challenge for the Council of Europe*, Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1995.

CoE, Duffy, Katherine, *Social Exclusion and Human Dignity in Europe: Background Report for the Proposed Initiative by the Council of Europe*, Activity II 1b, Steering Committee on Social Policy (CDPS (95)1), 1995.

CoE, *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1995.

CoE, *Education and Social Exclusion,* 1997 <http.//www.coe.fr/cp/97/562aper cent2897per cent29.htm> (accessed November 1998).

Eurostat

Eurostat, *Country Reports: Central and Eastern Europe 1991*, Statistisches Bundesamt, 1991.

Eurostat, *Europe in Figures*, fourth edition, 1995.

Conference/Organisation on Security and Co-operation in Europe

Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), "Roma (Gypsies) in the CSCE Region", *Report of the High Commissioner on National Minorities*, Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials, 21-23 September 1993.

Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Kocze, Angela, *The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe: Legal Remedies or Invisibility?* Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights- Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (ODIHR-CPRSI), OSCE, Warsaw, March/May 1996.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Reyniers, Alain, "Gypsy Populations and their Movements within Central and Eastern Europe and Towards some OECD Countries", *International Migration and Labour Market Policies - Occasional Papers*, No. 1, OECD/GD(95)20, Paris, 1995.

OECD News Release, *Beyond 2000: The New Social Policy Agenda,* 1995.

COMECON

The Vienna Institute for Comparative Economic Studies (eds.) *Comecon Data 1990,* Macmillan, London, 1991.

3. OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS: NATIONAL

Bulgaria

Natsionalen statisticheski institut (National Statistical Institute, NSI), Sotsialno-ikonomichesko razvitie (Socio-Economic Development), Sofia, 1996.

NSI, Sotsialno-demografski kharakteristiki na naselenieto (Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Population), Rousse, 1996.

NSI, Statisticheski spravochnik (Statistical Handbook), Sofia Central Statistical Office, various years.

Regionalna cuzhba (sizhva) po zaetosta - Ruse, ANALIZ, rusenska oblast (Regional Employment Office- Rousse, ANALYSIS, Rousse District), Janurary 1996.

USA

United States Agency for International Development (USAID), *SEED Report: Monitoring Country Progress in Central and Eastern Europe,* 1996. USAID Web site <http://www.info.usaid.gov/> (accessed July 1998).

USAID, *Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFECR)*, 1996.

U.S. Department of State, *Bulgaria Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997*, released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 30 Janurary, 1998.

4. NGO DOCUMENTS

Balkan Foundation for Cross-Cultural Education and Understanding Diversity *et al.* (organisers), The First International Conference *Education of Roma children in Europe: Problems and Perspectives,* Varna, 28-30 November 1997.

Bulgarian Helskinki Committee (BHC), *Obektiv* - Newsletter of the BHC, April 1995,

BHC, *Obektiv* - Newsletter of the BHC, November 1995.

BHC, *Obektiv* - Newsletter of the BHC, January 1996.

BHC, *Obektiv* - Newsletter of the BHC, July 1996.

Committee for the Defence of Minority Rights, *Minority Groups in Bulgaria in a Human Rights Context,* Sofia, 1994.

Committee for the Defence of Minority Rights, *Annual Report,* 1995.

CEGA and Foundation for Regional Development (organisers), Concluding Seminar on the Project "Self-Help Bureau", Stolipinovo, Plovdiv, 25-26 September 1997

European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), Veronika Leila Szente, *Sudden Rage at Dawn - Violence Against Roma in Romania*, Country Reports Series, No. 2, Budapest, September 1996.

ERRC, C. Cahn and N. Trehan, "Time of the Skinheads - Denial and Exclusion of Roma in Slovakia", *A Report of the European Roma Rights Centre*, No.3, Budapest, January 1997.

ERRC (ed.), *Profession: Prisoner - Roma in Detention in Bulgaria,* Country Reports Series, No. 6, Budapest, December 1997.

ERRC Press Release, *"Round Table on the Roma Question in Bulgaria."* October 5, 1998.

ERRC web site <http://www.errc.org> (accessed November 1998).

Foundation for Regional Development, *'REPORT': Work Done in the Period April-September 1996.*

Foundation for Regional Development,*'REPORT': Activities of the Stolipinovo Self-Help Bureau for the period 8th January-31 December, 1996.*

Foundation for Regional Development, *'REPORT': Work Done and Results Achieved in the Project "Land Settlement for Landless Roma Families"*, 1996.

Foundation for Regional Development, *'Project Proposal': Ecological Agriculture in the Villages with Roma - Newly Acquired Land"*, 1996.

Foundation for Regional Development, *Project Land Report,* Plovdiv, Bulgaria, 1997.

Foundation for Regional Development, *'Memo': Meeting between Sam and the People from the Villages of Mominsko and Borets*, 1997.

Foundation for Regional Development,*'Memo': Meeting of Sam with the Team from the Bureau*, 1997.

Human Rights Project, *Roma Rights in Focus,* 2, May/June 1996.

Human Rights Project, *Roma Rights in Focus,* 3, July/August 1996.

Open Society Foundation (OSF), *Programs '97*, OSF Press, Sofia, 1997.

Regional Environment Center (REC), *Problems, Progress and Possibilities: A Needs Assessment of Environmental NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe*, REC, Hungary, 1998.

Romani Bah Foundation *"Report"*, September 1997

Romani Bah Foundation and Centre for the Study of Democracy, *"Project: Socio-Demographic Survey of the Population of 'Faculteta' District"*, 1997.

Romani Bah Foundation *"Project: Territorial Structure of Roma Regions and Residential Policy of the Roma Community"*, 1997.

Union of Bulgarian Foundations and Associations (UBFA) Lipovski, O. (ed.), *Directory of Non-Governmental Organisations in Bulgaria*, Sofia, 1997.

SECONDARY SOURCES

1. METHODOLOGY

Atkinson, Paul and Martyn Hammersly, "Ethnography and Participant Observation." In Norman K. Denzin, and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications, London, 1994.

Becker, H. S. "Problems of Inference and Proof in Participant Observation", *American Sociological Review*, 23 (6), 1958.

Briggs, C. L. *Learning How to Ask*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986.

Bulmer, Martin, "Why Don't Sociologists Make More Use of Official Statistics?" In M. Bulmer (ed.), *Sociological Research Methods*, Macmillan, London, 2nd edition, 1984.

Burgess, Robert G. *In the Field - An Introduction to Field Research*, Contemporary Social Research 8, London, New York, 4th edition, 1990.

Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications, London, 1994.

Denzin Norman K., *Sociological Methods: A Sourcebook*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1978.

Gold, Raymond L., "Roles in Sociological Field Observation", *Social Forces*, 36 (3), 1958.

Gorden, Raymond, L. *Interviewing Strategy, Techniques and Tactics*, The Dorsey Press, Homewood, Illinois, 1969.

Guba, Egon G. and Yvonne S. Lincoln, "Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research." In Norman K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications, London, 1994.

Kirk, Jerome and Marc L. Miller, *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*, Qualitative Research Methods Series 1, Sage University Paper, Sage Publications, London, 1986.

May, Tim, *Social Research,* Open University Press, Buckingham, 1993.

McCall, George J. and J. L. Simmons (eds.), *Issues in Participant Observation: A Text and Reader*, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, London, 1969.

Miller, Gale, "Building Bridges: The Possibility of Analytic Dialogue Between Ethnography, Conversation Analysis and Foucault." In D. Silverman (ed.), *Qualitative Research Theory, Method and Practice,* Sage Publications, London, 1998.

Miller, Jody and Barry Glassner, "The 'Inside' and the 'Outside': Finding Realities in Interviews", in D. Silverman (ed.), *Qualitative Research Theory, Method and Practice,* Sage Publications, London, 1998.

Nader, L., "Up the Anthropologist - Perspectives Gained from Studying Up." In D. Hymes (ed.), *Reinventing Anthropology*, Random House, New York, 1969.

Schwartz, Morris S. and Charlotte Green Schwartz, "Problems in Participant Observation." In George J. McCall and J. L. Simmons (eds.), *Issues in Participant Observation: A Text and Reader*, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, London, 1969.

Schwartsman, Helen B., "The Ethnographic Evaluation of Human Service Programs", *Anthropological Quarterly*, 56, 1983.

Schwartsman, Helen B., *Ethnography in Organisations*, Qualitative Research Methods Series 27, Sage University Paper, Sage Publications, Newbury Park, London, 1993.

Silverman, David, *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*, Sage Publications, London, 1993.

Silverman, David (ed.), *Qualitative Research Theory, Method and Practice,* Sage Publications, London, 1998.

Spradley, James. P., *The Ethnographic Interview*, Holt, Reinhart and Winston, New York, 1979.

2. GYPSIES: GENERAL

Acton, Thomas, *Gypsy Politics and Social Change – The Development of Ethnic Ideology and Pressure Politics Among British Gypsies from Victorian Reformism to Romani Nationalism,* Routledge, London, 1974.

Acton, Thomas (ed.), *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity*, University of Hertfordshire Press, Hatfield, 1997.

Acton, Thomas and Gary Mundy (eds.), *Romani Culture and Gypsy Identity*, University of Hertfordshire Press, Hatfield, 1997.

Acton, Thomas, "Authenticity, Expertise, Scholarship and Politics: Conflicting Goals in Romani Studies", *Inaugural Lecture Series*, The University of Greenwich, June, 1998.

Bobasch, Michaela, "Où vas-tu, gitan? À l'école", *Le Monde de l'Éducation,* January 1990.

Casimir, Michael J. (ed.), *Mobility and Territoriality*, Aparno Rao, Berg. New York/ Oxford, 1992.

Charlemagne, Jacqueline, "Les Tsiganes en Europe: Citoyenneté et Intégration", *Hommes et Migrations*, 1188-89, June/July 1995.

Charlemagne, Jacqueline, *Migrations Est-Ouest: Le Cas des Tsiganes*, Laboratoire de Sociologie Juridique Paris II - CNRS, Convention FAS, No. 75 1084 91, December 1992.

Clébert, Jean-Paul, *The Gypsies*, Vista Books, London, 1963.

Courthiade, Marcel, "Training for Publication." In J. P. Liégeois (ed.), *Interface 16*, Centre de recherches tsiganes, Université René Descartes, Paris, November, 1994.

Courthiade, Marcel, "The Romani Summer School: Already a Tradition." In J. P. Liégeois (ed.), *Interface 16*, Centre de recherches tsiganes, Université René Descartes, Paris, November, 1994.

Danbakli, Marielle, *On Gypsies: Texts Issued by International Institutions*, Centre de recherches tsiganes, CRDP Midi-Pyrénées, Paris, 1994.

Druker, Jeremy, "Romani Rights", *Transitions*, 6 (1) January, 1999.

Fohr, Anne, "Les Intouchables de Tourville-la-Rivière", *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 28 September - 4 October, 1989.

Fraser, Angus, *The Gypsies*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2nd edition, 1995.

Fraser, Angus, "The Rom Migrations" *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 2 (2), 1992.

Fraser, Angus, "Rum Lot." In Matt T. Salo (ed.), *100 Years of Gypsy Studies* 5, The Gypsy Lore Society, Cheverly, Maryland, 1990.

Garriaga, Carmen, "Community Work with Gypsies and Communities in Conflict", *Community Development Journal*, 29 (2), April 1994.

Gheorghe, Nicolae, "The Social Construction of Romani Identity." In Thomas Acton (ed.), *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity*, University of Hertfordshire Press, Hatfield, 1997.

Gheorghe, Nicolae and Thomas Acton "Dealing with Multiculturality: Minority, Ethnic, National and Human Rights." In Council of Europe (ed.), *Gypsies in the Locality*, Council of Europe Press, Strasburg, 1994.

Gmelch, Sharon Bohn, "Groups That Don't Want In: Gypsies and Other Artisan Trader, and Entertainer Minorities", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 15, 1986.

Gonin, J. M. and V. Hugeux "Les Tziganes, Parias de l'Europe", *L'Express*, 30 October 1992.

Hancock, Ian, *The Pariah Syndrome*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1987.

Hancock, Ian, "The Roots of Inequity: Romani Cultural Rights in their Historical and Social Contexts", *Immigrants and Minorities*, 2 (1) March 1992.

Hancock, Ian, "The Struggle for the Control of Identity", *Transitions*, 4 (4), September 1997.

Hartmann, Fatima, "Information File: Germany - Roma Participation in School Provision." In J. P. Liegeois (ed.), *Interface 16*, November, Centre de recherches tsiganes, Université René Descartes, Paris, 1994.

Hawes, D. and B. Perez, *The Gypsy and the State*, SAUS, The Policy Press, 1995.

Holmes, P. (ed.), *West Midlands Consortium - Education Service for Travelling Children- Information Package*, 1997.

Kalanin, Jan, Yutaka Takarada *et al.* "Gypsy Phenylketonuria: A Point of Mutation of The Phenylalanine Hydroxylase Gene in Gypsy Families from Slovakia", *American Journal of Medical Genetics*, 49, 1994.

Kenrick, Donald and Gratton Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gyspies,* Chatto-Heinman for Sussex University Press, Sussex, 1972.

Kenrick, Donald and Gratton Puxon, *Gypsies Under the Swastika,* Interface Collection, University of Hertfordshire Press, Hatfield, 1995.

Lee, K.W. and W.G. Warren, "Alternative Education: Lessons from Gypsy Thought and Practice", *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 39 (3), 1991.

Liégeois, Jean-Pierre, *Mutation Tsigane,* Editions Complexe, Presse Universitaires de France, Bruxelle, Paris, 1976.

Liégeois, Jean-Pierre, "Governments and Gypsies: From Rejection to Assimilation." In A. Rao (ed.), *The Other Nomads,* Böhlau Verlay, Germany, 1987.

Liégeois, Jean-Pierre (ed.), *Interface 18*, Centre de recherches tsiganes, Université René Descartes, Paris, May, 1995.

Liégeois, Jean-Pierre (ed.), *Interface 14*, Centre de recherches tsiganes, Université René Descartes, Paris, May 1994.

Liégeois, Jean-Pierre (ed.), *Interface 15*, Centre de recherches tsiganes, Université René Descartes, Paris, August, 1994.

Liégeois, Jean-Pierre (ed.), *Interface 16,* Centre de recherches tsiganes, Université René Descartes, Paris, November, 1994.

Liégeois, Jean-Pierre, *Roma, Gypsies, Travellers*, Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1994.

Liégeois, Jean-Pierre, "Introductory Report", *Gypsies in the Locality*, Proceedings Report on the Colloquy held in Slovakia 15-17 October 1992, Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1994.

Liégeois, Jean-Pierre and Nicolae Gheorghe, *Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority,* MRG International Report, 4, 1995.

Yaron Matras, "Book Review of PER: 'The Roma in the 21st Century: A Policy Paper." In Jetske Mijs (ed.), *O Drom International*, pilot edition, 1999.

Mayall, David, "British Gypsies and the State", *History Today*, 42, June 1992.

Mirga Andrzej and Nicolae Gheorghe, *The Roma in the Twentieth-First Century: A Policy Paper*, Project on Ethnic Relations, New Jersey, May 1997.

Murray, I., "Gypsy Future 'Threatened by New Age Clampdown'", *The Times*, 24 January, 1995.

Murray, I., "Gummer Blocks Gypsy Site Permit", *The Times*, 6 February, 1995.

Nirenberg, Jud, "The Course of Romani Nationalism." In Conference Proceedings: *Nationalism and Racism in the Liberal Order,* J.E. Purkyne University, Czech Republic, 1-6 July 1997.

Okely, Judith, "Gypsy Women: Models in Conflict", in S. Ardener (ed.) *Perceiving Women,* Malaby, London, 1975.

Okely, Judith, *The Traveller Gypsies,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983.

Okely, Judith, "Non-Territorial Culture as the Rationale for the Assimilation of Gypsy Children", *Childhood -A Global Journal of Child Research*, 4 (1), 1997.

Okely, Judith, "Gorgio and the Travellers" (details unknown).

O'Nions, Helen, "The Marginalisation of Gypsies", *Web Journal of Current Legal Issues*, Blackstone Press Ltd, 1995, website <http://webjcli.ncl.ac.uk/articles3/onions3.html> (accessed February 1996).

Pahl, Jan and Michael Vaile, "Health and Health Care Among Travellers", *Journal of Social Policy*, 17 (2), 1988.

Rao, A. (ed.), *The Other Nomads*, Böhlau Verlay, Germany, 1987.

Salo, Matt T., *100 Years of Gypsy Studies* 5, The Gypsy Lore Society, Cheverly, Maryland, 1990.

Sandland, R., "Travelling: Back to the Future?", *New Law Journal*, 3 June 1994.

Shuinéar, Sinead ni, "Why do Gaujos Hate Gypsies So Much, Anyway? A Case Study". In Thomas Acton (ed.), *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity*, University of Hertfordshire Press, Hatfield, 1997.

Sutherland, Ann, *Gypsies: The Hidden Americans*, Tavistock, London, 1975.

Weinerová, Renata, *Romanies - In Search of Lost Security?*, 3, Institute of Ethnology and Journal Cesky Lid, Prague, 1994.

Weyrauch, W.O. and M. A. Bell, "Autonomous Lawmaking; The Case of the 'Gypsies'", *Yale Law Journal*, 103 (2), 1993.

3. GYPSIES: EASTERN EUROPE

Auzias, C. "Les Roms et le Processus d'Helsinki", *Les Familles Roms d'Europe de l'Est*, Alize Production, 1992.

Bacová, Viera, "HI'adanie rómskej identity", *Sociologia*, 23 (1-2), 1991.

Barany, Zoltan, "Protracted Marginality: The East European Roma", in Sam C. Nolutshungu (ed.), *Margins of Insecurity - Minorities and International Security*, University of Rochester Press, New York/Suffolk, 1996.

Barany, Zoltan, "The Roma in Macedonia: Ethnic Politics and the Marginal Condition in a Balkan state", *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 18 (3), July, 1995.

Barany, Zoltan, "Living on the Edge: The East European Roma in Post Communist Politics and Societies", *Slavic Review,* 53 (2), 1994.

Bartosz, Adam. "La Communauté ROM en Pologne - La Situation Sociale et Politique", *Revue Française des Affaires Sociales,* 2, January/March, 1992.

Bereczkei, Tamas, "r-Selected Reproductive Strategies Among Hungarian Gipsies: A Preliminary Analysis", *Ethology and Sociobiology*, 14, 1993.

Clark, Colin, "Counting Backwards: The Roma 'Numbers Game' in Central and Eastern Europe", *Radical Statistics*, 69, Autumn, 1998.

Crowe, D. M., *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia,* IB Tauris Publishers, London, 1995.

Crowe, D. M. and John Koltsi (eds.), *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe,* M.E. Sharpe, Armonk New York/London, 1991.

Ficowski, Jerzy, *The Gypsies in Poland, History and Customs*, Interpress Publishers, Yugoslavia, 1990.

Fox, Jonathan, *Roma (Gypsies) in Bulgaria*, web site <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar/bulroma.htm>, (106) 1/10/95, update 12/4/95,(accessed June 1997).

Gheorghe, Nicolae, "Roma-Gypsy Ethnicity in Eastern Europe", *Social Research*, 58 (4), Winter, 1991.

Groves, Richard, "Development within Policing and the Roma Community in Nadejhda, Bulgaria", *OSCE - CPRSI Newsletter*, 3(2), April 1997.

Guy, Willy, "Ways of Looking at Roms: The Case of Czechoslovakia", in F. Rehfisch (ed.) *Gypsies, Tinkers and Other Travellers*, Academic Press, London, 1975.

Havas, Kertesi and Kemeny, "The Statistics of Deprivation: The Roma in Hungary", *Hungarian Quarterly*, 36, Summer, 1995.

Kenedi, Janos, "Why is the Gypsy the Scapegoat and not the Jew?" *East European Reporter*, 2 (1), 1986.

Kenrick, Donald, *Morphology and Lexicon of the Romany Dialect of Kotel, Bulgaria.* Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1969.

Kenrick, Donald, "The Gypsies of Bulgaria Before and After the 10th of November", paper presented to the *Gypsy Lore Society Conference*, July 1991.

Kenrick, Donald, "History of Bulgarian Roma/Gypsies", *Occassional Paper of the Romany Institute,* (date unknown).

Kolev, Alexander, "Census Taking in a Bulgarian Gypsy Mahala (Ruse, Dec. 1992)" *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society,* Series 5, 4 (1), February 1994.

Konstantinov, Yulian, "Hunting for Gaps Through Boundaries: Gypsy Tactics for Economic Survival in the Context of the Second Phase of Post-Totalitarian Changes in Bulgaria (1994-)", *Innovation*, 7 (3), 1994.

Kostelancik, D. J. "The Gypsies of Czechoslovkia: Political and Ideological Considerations in the Development of Policy", *Studies in Comparative Communism*, 22 (4), Winter, 1989.

Kyuchukov, Hristo, *Romany Children and Their Preparation for Literacy: A Case Study,* Tilburg University Press, Tilburg, 1995.

Lemon, Alaina, "No Land, No Contracts for Romani Workers", *Transition*, 2 (13), 28 June, 1996.

Lemon, Alaina "Hot Blood and Black Pearls: Socialism, Society, and Authenticity at the Moscow Teatr Romen", *Theatre Journal*, 48, 1996.

Marushiakova, Elena, "Ethnic Identity Among Gypsy Groups in Bulgaria", *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 2 (2), 1992.

Marushiakova, Elena, "Relations Among the Gypsy Groups in Bulgaria." In Project on Ethnic Relations (ed.), *The Ethnic Situation in Bulgaria*, Club '90 Publishers, Sofia, 1993.

Marushiakova, Elena, "Cultural Traditions of the Gypsies in Present-Day Bulgaria and the Attitude of the Central and Local Authorities Toward Them." In Council of Europe (ed.), *Gypsies in the Locality,* Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 1994.

Marushiakova, Elena and Vesselin Popov, *Studii Romani Vols. I and II*, Club '90 Publishers, Sofia, 1994/5.

Marushiakova, Elena and Vesselin Popov, "The Gypsies of Bulgaria: Problems of the Multicultural Museum Exhibition", Club '90 Publishers, Sofia, 1995.

Marushiakova, Elena and Vesselin Popov, *Studii Romani Vol. IV: The Stories of the Bridge,* Club '90 Publishers, Sofia, 1997.

Marushiakova, Elena and Vesselin Popov, "Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria - Literacy, Policy and Community Development (1985-1995)", *Alpha*, UNESCO, Institute for Education, 1997.

Marushiakova, Elena and Vesselin Popov, *Gypsies (Roma) in Bulgaria*, Studien zur Tsganelogi und Folklovistik 18, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 1997.

Marushiakova, Elena and Vesselin Popov, *The Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria - Policy and Community Development,* Sofia, forthcoming.

Milosheva, Mariana (ed.), *Moving Beyond Walls -The Stolipinovo People Taking Charge of their Community*, CEGA, Sofia, 1997.

Mirga, Andrzej, "Roma Territorial Behaviour and State Policy: The Case of the Socialist Countries of East Europe." In M. J. Casimir (ed.), *Mobility and Territoriality*, Aparno Rao, Berg. New York/ Oxford, 1992.

Mirga, Andrzej, "The Effects of State Assimilation on Polish Gypsies", *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society,* 3 (2), 1993.

Pehe, J., "Law On Romanies Causes Uproar in Czech Republic", *RFE/RL Research Report,* 2 (7), 12 February, 1993.

Pinnock, Katherine, "The NGO Sector and Gypsy Resistance in Bulgaria", *REERC Discussion Paper,* 2, University of Wolverhampton, 1998.

Popov, Vesselin, "The Gypsies and Traditional Bulgarian Culture", *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Series 5, 3 (1),1993.

Popov, Vesselin, "Bulgarian Gypsies (Ethnic Relations)", in Project on Ethnic Relations (ed.) *The Ethnic Situation in Bulgaria*, Club '90 Publishers, Sofia, 1993.

Powell, C. "Time for Another Immoral Panic? The Case of the Czechoslovak Gypsies", *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, 22, 1994.

Rican, Pavel, "Sociometric Status of Gypsy Children in Ethnically Mixed Classes", *Studia Psychologica*, 38 (3), 1996.

Silverman, Carol, "Bulgarian Gypsies: Adaptation in a Socialist Context", *Nomadic Peoples*, 21/22, 1986.

Silverman, Carol, "Negotiating "Gypsiness" Strategy in Context", *American Folklore*, 101 (401), 1988.

Silverman, Carol, "Persecution and Politicisation: Roma (Gypsies) of Eastern Europe", *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Summer 1995.

Silverman, Carol, "Music and Marginality: Roma (Gypsies) of Bulgaria and Macedonia", in Mark Slobin (ed.) *Retuning Culture - Musical Changes in Central and Eastern Europe*, Duke University Press, Durham/London, 1996.

Silverman, Carol, "State, Market and Gender Relations Among Bulgarian Roma, 1970-90", *East European Anthropology Group*, 14 (2), Autumn, 1996.

Simonov, Simon, "The Gypsies: A Re-emerging Minority", *Report on Eastern Europe*, 25 May 1990.

Soulis, George C., "The Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire and the Balkans in the Late Middle Ages", *Dumbarton Oak Papers*, 15, 1961.

Stewart, Michael, "Gypsies, Work and Civil Society", *Journal of Communist Studies*, 6, June 1990.

Stewart, Michael, *The Time of the Gypsies*, Westview Press, Oxford, 1997.

Stewart, Michael, "The Puzzle of Roma Persistence: Group Identity Without a Nation." In T. Acton and G. Mundy (eds.), *Romani Culture and Gypsy Identity,* University of Hertfordshire Press, Hatfield, 1997.

Thomas, T. "Bulgaria Trip Report", February 22-26 1997, unpublished, 1997.

Tomova, Ilona, *The Gypsies in the Transition Period*, International Centre for Minority Studies and Inter Cultural Relations, Sofia, 1995.

Troxel, Luan, "Bulgaria's Gypsies: Numerically Strong, Politically Weak", *RFE/RL Research Report*, 10, 6 March 1992.

Ulc, Otto, "Communist National Minority Policy: The Case of the Gypsies in Czechoslovakia", *Soviet Studies*, 20 (4), 1964.

Zang, T., *Destroying Ethnic Identity - The Gypsies of Bulgaria.* A Helsinki Watch Report, New York, June 1991.

4. NGOS: GENERAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Anheier, Helmut K., "Indigenous Voluntary Associations, Non-Profits, and Development in Africa." In W. W. Powell (ed.), *The Non-Profit Sector - A Research Handbook,* Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1987.

Anheier, Helmut K. and Eckhard Priller, "The Non-Profit Sector in East Germany Before and After Reunification", *Voluntus,* 2 (1), 1991.

Buijs, Dieke, "On Admittance, Access, Cooperation and Participation: The Basic Concepts of the 'Access and Participation' Research." In Benno Galjart and D. Buiji (eds.), *Participation of the Poor in Development - Contributions to a Seminar*, Leiden Development Studies, 2, University of Leiden, 1982.

Buijs, H.Y., *Access and Participation*, ICA-Publicatie, 33, Leiden, 1979.

Carothers, Thomas, "Aiding Postcommunist Societies: A Better Way?", *Problems of Post-Communism*, September/October, 1996. Website <http://www.ceip.org/people/caroaid.htm> (accessed April 1997).

Clark, John, *Democratising Development,* Earthscan Publications, London, 1991.

Davis, Randall, J., *The Rebirth of the Non-Profit Sector in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, Center for Civil Society International, Washington, 1996.

Estes, Carroll L. Elizabeth A. Binney and Linda A. Bergthold, "How the Legitimacy of the Sector Has Eroded." In Virginia A. Hodgkinson, Richard W. Lyman *et al.*, *The Future of the Non-Profit Sector,* Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco/London, 1989.

Flaherty, Susan L.Q., "Philanthropy Without Borders: US Private Foundation Activity in Eastern Europe", *Voluntus*, 3, 1992.

Fowler, Alan, "Wither the Third Sector? A Response to Estelle James", *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organisations*, 9 (3), 1998.

Galjart, B. and D. Buijs (eds.), *Participation of the Poor in Development - Contributions to a Seminar*, Leiden Development Studies, 2, University of Leiden, 1982.

Hansmann, Henry, "Economic Theories of Nonprofit Organisation." In W. W. Powell (ed.), *The NonProfit Sector - A Research Handbook,* Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1987.

Hinton, Rachel, "NGOs as Agents of Change? The Case of the Bhutanese Refugee Programme", *Cambridge Anthropology*, 19 (1), 1996.

Hodgkinson, Virginia A. Richard W. Lyman *et.al.* (eds.), T*he Future of the Nonprofit Sector*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco and London, 1989.

Hodgkinson, Virginia A., "Key Challenges Facing the Nonprofit Sector." In Hodgkinson, Lyman *et al.* (eds.), *The Future of the Nonprofit Sector,* Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco/London, 1989.

Laczko, Frank, "Social Policy and the Third Sector in East-Central Europe" in Stein Ringen and Wallace (eds.), *Societies in Transition: East-Central Europe Today,* Vol I, Avebury and Aldershot, 1994.

McCarthy, Kathleen, D, Virginia A. Hodgkinson, Russy D. Sumariwalla *et al.*, *The Non-Profit Sector in the Global Community - Voices From Many Nations*, Jossey-Bass Publications, San Francisco/London, 1992.

Nikolov, S. "The Emerging Nonprofit Sector in Bulgaria: Its Historical Dimensions." In K. McCarthy, V Hodgkinson and R Sumariwalla (eds.), *The Nonprofit Sector in the Global Community,* Jossey-Bass Publications, San Francisco/London, 1992.

Ostrander, Susan, A. "The Problem of Poverty and Why Philanthropy Neglects it." In Lyman Hodkinson, *et al.* (eds.), *The Future of the Non-Profit Sector*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, London, 1989.

Paul, Samual, *Community Participation in Development Projects - The World Bank Experience,* World Bank Discussion Papers No. 6, Washington D.C., 1987.

Powell, W. W. (ed.), *The NonProfit Sector - A Research Handbook,* Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1987.

Robinson, M. A., *Evaluating the Impact of NGOs in Rural Poverty Alleviation: India Case Study,* Overseas Development Institute, London, 1991.

Snavely, Keith, "The Welfare State and the Emerging Non-Profit Sector in Bulgaria", *Europe-Asia,* 48 (4), 1996.

Snavely, Keith and Udey Resai, "Bulgaria's Non-Profit Sector: The Search for Form, Purpose, and Legitimacy", *Voluntus*, 6 (1), 1995.

Spiro, Peter, J., "New Global Communities: Nongovernmental Organisations in International Decision-Making Institutions", *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter, 1995.

Stubbs, P., *Developing an Evaluation Model for Grassroots Social Reconstruction and Peace-Building Projects,* Mimeo, ISPRU, 1996.

Walker, Colin Norman (ed.), "NGOs Have a Role to Play in Building a Civil Society", *European Dialogue*, The European Commission bi-monthly magazine for Central Europe and the Baltics, March-April, No.2, 1998 <http://europa.eu.iny/en/comm/dg10/infcom/eur-dial/frameset_ backlist.html> (accessed May 1998).

Williams, Aubrey, "A Growing Role for NGOs in Development", *Finance and Development,* 27 (4), December, 1990.

Winship, Elizabeth, "One Bulgarian NGO's Experience", *OSCE - CPRSI Newsletter*, Spotlight on Legal Assistance, 1 (3), December, 1995.

Wunker, Stephen, W. "The Promise of Non-Profits in Poland and Hungary: An Analysis of Third Sector Renaissance", *Voluntus*, 2 (2), 1991.

5. GENERAL

Alcock, P. *Social Policy in Britain Themes and Issues*, Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1996.

Alter, Rolf, "Investing in Eastern Europe-Catalyst for Transition", *The OECD Observer,* 186, February/March, 1994.

Arab, A. and S. Cooley *et al.,* "Bulletin of Electoral Statistics and Public Opinion Research Data", *East European Politics and Society,* 8(2), Spring, 1994.

Bahry and Silver, "Soviet Citizen Participation on the Eve of Democratisation", *American Political Science Review,* 84, 1990.

Barr, N. and Harbison, R. W., "Hopes Tears and Transformation", *Transition,* 5 (8), October, 1996.

Bauman, Z., "Social Dissent in the East European Political System." In B. L. Faber (ed.), *The Social Structure of Eastern Europe: Transition and Progress in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia,* Praeger Publishers, London, 1971.

Beck, Russell W. and Magda Paun, "Ethnicity and Consumption in Romania." In Janeen A. Costa and Gary J. Barmossy (eds.), *Marketing in a Multicultural World*, Sage Publications, London, 1995.

Beleva, Iskra, Daniela Bobeva, Silvia Dilova and Asen Mitchkovski, "Bulgaria: Labour Market Trends and Policies." In Georg Fischer and Guy Standing (eds.) *Structural Change in Central and Eastern Europe: Labour Market and Social Policy Implications,* OECD, Paris, 1992.

Bell, Daniel, *The End of Ideology*, Free Press of Glencoe, Illinois, 1960.

Beteille Andre (ed.), *Inequality,* Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1969.

Bhalla, Ajit and Frederic Lapeyre, "Social Exclusion: Towards an Analytical and Operational Framework", *Development and Change*, 28, 1997.

Biersteker, Thomas, J. "Reducing the Role of the State in the Economy: A Conceptual Exploration of IMF and World Bank Prescriptions", *International Studies Quarterly Journal*, 34, 1990.

Blackburn, C., *Poverty and Health,* Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1991.

Blanchard, O., S. Commander and F. Corcicel, "Unemployment in Eastern Europe", *Finance and Development*, 31 (4), December 1994.

Blazyca, G., "The USSR: Unrelenting Economic Pressure for Reform", *Capital and Class Conference of Socialist Economists*, 38, 1989.

Bokros, Lajos, (interview with), "Hungarian Finance Minister Lajos Bokros Explains His Package", *Transition,* 6 (5-6), May-June, 1995.

Bowker, M. and R. Brown, *From Cold War to Collapse,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993.

Boyes, R., "Standing, Kneeling and Crawling", *Times Literary Supplement*, 10 February, 1995.

Broki, L. and Z. Mansfeldova, "Czech Republic - Special Issue Political Data Yearbook", *European Journal of Political Research,* 28 (3/4), December, 1995.

Brown, Phillip and Rosemary Crompton (eds.), *A New Europe? - Economic Restructuring and Social Exclusion*, UCL Press, London, 1994.

Brownlie, I., "The Rights of Peoples in Modern International Law." In J. Crawford (ed.), *The Rights of Peoples,* Clarendon Paperbacks, Oxford, 1992.

Brownlie, I. (ed.), *Basic Documents on Human Rights*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992.

Brym, R. J., "Re-evaluating Mass Support for Political and Economic Change in Russia", *Europe-Asia Studies,* 48 (5), 1996.

Brzezinski, Matthew, "Equal Shares for All in the New Poland", *The Guardian,* 24 July 1995.

Buckley, Mary, *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1989.

Buckwalter, Donald W., "Spatial Inequality, Foreign Investment, and Economic Transition in Bulgaria", *Professional Geographer,* 47 (3), 1995.

Budhoo, Davison, "Me-First Madness", *New Internationalist*, 214, December 1990.

Buhmann, B. *et al.* "Equivalence Scales, Well-Being, Inequality, and Poverty: Sensitivity Estimates Across Ten Countries Using The Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) Database", *The Review of Income and Wealth*, 34 (2), June, 1988.

Burgess, Adam, *Divided Europe: The New Domination of the East*, Pluto Press, London, 1997.

Burton, Cathie, *Call to Combat Social Exclusion*, 1998 <http://www.coe.fr/cp/98/54aper cent2898per cent29.htm> (accessed November 1998).

Burton, Cathie, *Conference Draws up Blueprint for Action Against Social Exclusion,* 1998 <http://www.coe.fr/cp/98365aper cent2898per cent29.htm> (accessed November 1998).

Butterfield, Jim, "State Response to Informal Groups." In H. R. Huttenbach and J. Sedaits (eds), *Nationalities Papers* (Special Issue), Fall, 1990.

Bruno, Marta, "The Impact of Foreign Aid and Businesses on Women in the Moscow Labour Market", presented to the Seminar *Transformation, Geography and Identity, School of Geography*, University of Birmingham, 11 June 1996.

Cahill, Carmel, "From Marx to Market", *The OECD Observer*, 182, June/July, 1993.

Callinicos, Alex, "Marxism and the Crisis in Social History." In John Rees (ed.), *Essays on Historical Materialism*, Bookmarks, London, 1998.

Callinicos, Alex, *Race and Class*, Bookmarks, London, 1993.

Calvert, Peter, *The Concept of Class - An Historical Introduction,* St. Martins Press, New York, 1982.

Chaliand, Gerard (ed.), *Minority Peoples in the Age of Nation-States*, Pluto Press, London, 1989.

Chernina, N. V., "Poverty as a Social Phenomenon in Russian Society", *Russian Sociological Review*, 36 (4), July/August, 1995.

Chu, Ke-Young and Sanjeev Gupta, "Protecting the Poor-Social Safety Nets During Transition", *Finance and Development*, 30 (2), June, 1993.

Cohen, G. A., "Amartya Sen's Unequal World - Review", *New Left Review*, 203, January/February, 1994.

Corcoran, Mary, Greg J. Duncan, Gerald Gurin and Patricia Gurin, "Myth and Reality: The Causes and Persistence of Poverty", *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management,* 4 (4), 1985.

Cornia, G. A., "Poverty, Food Consumption, and Nutrition During the Transition to the Market Economy in Eastern Europe", *American Economic Review: AEA Papers and Proceedings,* 84 (2), May, 1994.

Corporate Enterprise Centre, *Eurofund - Regional and European Funding Support*, 1, 1998.

Crampton, R. J., *A Short History of Modern Bulgaria*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987.

Cross, T. and R. B. Slater, "The 1996 Elections - The Real Victor was Black Voter Apathy", *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 14, 1996.

Darwin, Judith, "Child Poverty and Social Exclusion in Eastern Europe", *University of Sussex Spring Term Seminar Series*, 1997. IDS, Report on Seminar Series Web site <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/research/food/ povsem8.html> (accessed November 1998).

Deacon, Bob, "Developments in East European Social Policy." In C. Jones (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Welfare State in Europe*, Routledge, London, 1993.

Deacon, Bob, *Global Social Policy: International Organisations and the Future of Welfare,* SAGE, London, 1997.

Demery, L. and T. Addison, *The Alleviation of Poverty under Structural Adjustment*, A World Bank Publication, Washington D.C., 1987.

Desai, Padma, *Perestroika in Perspective: The Designs and Dilemmas of Soviet Reform*, Tauris, London, 1989.

Dicheva, Lyudmilla, "The Ethnic Turks in Bulgaria - Past and Present." In Paul Brett, Martin Dangerfield, Glyn Hambrook and Ludmilla Kostovo (eds.), *Europe: Real and Imagined*, PIC Publishers, Veliko Turnovo, 1998.

Dobrinsky, Rumen *et al.* "Economic Transition and Industrial Restructuring in Bulgaria." In M.A. Landeresmann and I. P. Szekely (eds.) *Industrial Restructuring and Trade Orientation in Eastern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995.

Donkov, Kiril, "Etnichiat surstav na naselenueto na Bulgaria" (The Ethnic Composition of the Bulgarian Population), *Statistika*, 2, 1994.

Dragunskii, D. V., "Imposed Ethnicity", *Russian Sociological Review*, 36 (2), May/April, 1995.

Duch, Raymond M., "Tolerating Economic Reform: Popular Support for Transition to a Free Market in the Former Soviet Union", *American Political Science Review,* 87(3), September, 1993.

Duncan, Gerg, J. Gustafsson, B. *et al.,* "Poverty Dynamics in Eight Countries", *Journal of Population Economics*, 6, 1993.

Easterly, W. and Fischer, S., "What Can We Learn From The Soviet Collapse", *Finance and Development,* 31 (4), December 1994.

Economist, "Polands Economic Reforms", 326 (7795), 23 January, 1993.

Einhorn, Barbara, *Cinderella Goes To Market,* Verso, London, 1993.

Ellwood, Wayne, "Pinstripes and Poverty in the World Bank", *New Internationalist*, 214, December 1990.

Ellwood, Wayne, "The World Bank - The Facts", *New Internationalist*, 214, December 1990.

European Commission of Human Rights "Complaint under Art. 8 of the ECHR Held to Be Admissible", *Journal of Planning and Environmental Law*, June, 1994.

Evans, Richard J., *In Defence of History,* Granta Books, London, 1997.

Fields, Gary, S., "Poverty and Income Distribution - Data for Measuring Poverty and Inequality Changes in the Developing Countries", *Journal of Development Economics*, 44, 1994.

Fine, Keith Sapsin, "Fragile Stablity and Change." In Abraham and Antonia Hundler, C. Hayes (eds.), *Preventing Conflict in the Post-Communist World,* Washington Brookings Institute, Washington D.C., 1996.

Finifter and Mickiewicz, "Redefining the Political System of the USSR: Mass Support for Political Change", *American Political Science Review,* 86 (4), December, 1992.

Fischer, G. "Rapporteur's Report Social Protection." In Fischer and Standing (eds.), *Structural Change in CEE Labour Market and Social Policy Implications*, OECD and ILO, Paris, 1993.

Foucault, J.P., "Exclusion, Inegalités et Justice Sociale", *Esprit,* 182, June, 1992.

Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish - The Birth of the Prison,* Penguin Books, Middelsex, 1975 (reprint 1991).

Fox, J., *Health Inequalities in European Countries,* Gower, Aldershot, 1989.

Fraser, N., "From Redistribution to Recognition: Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Post-Socialist' Age", *New Left Review,* 212, July/August, 1995.

Freidgut, T. H. and J. W. Hahn (eds.), *Local Power and Post-Soviet Politics*, M.E. Sharpe, London, 1994.

Frydman, R. and A. Rapaczynski, "Privatization in Eastern Europe: Is the State Withering Away?", *Finance and Development*, 30 (2), June, 1993.

Fuchs, Estelle, "How Teachers Learn to Help Children Fail", in Nell Keddie (ed.), *Tinker, Tailor...The Myth of Cultural Deprivation*, Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1973.

Fuchs, Victor, R., "Redefining Poverty and Redistrubting Income", *The Public Interest,* 8, Summer, 1967.

Fukuyama, Francis, *The End of History and The Last Man*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1992.

Gal, Susun, "Language and the 'Arts of Resistance' - Review Essay", *Cultural Anthropology*, 10 (3), 1995.

Gaudier, M., "Pauvretés, Inégalités, Exclusions: Le Nouveau des Approches Théoriques et des Pratiques Sociales", *Série bibliographique - Institut International d'Études Sociales*, 17, 1993.

Gellner, Ernest, *Nations and Nationalism*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1983.

George, V. and N. Manning, *Socialism, Social Welfare and the Soviet Union*, Routledge, London, 1980.

Germani, Gino, *Marginality*, Transaction Books, New Jersey, 1980.

Gibson and Raymond L Dutch, "Emerging Democratic Values in Soviet Political Culture." In Miller Resinger and Hesli (eds.), *Public Opinion and Regime Change,* Westview Press, Oxford, 1993.

Giddens, Anthony, *Sociology*, Macmillan, Kent, 1986 (reprint 1993).

Glennerster, Howard and James Midgley (eds.), *The Radical Right and the Welfare State: An International Assessment*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1991.

Gold, M and D. Mayes "Rethinking a Social Policy for Europe." In R. Simpson and R. Walker (eds.), *Europe: for Richer or Poorer?*, Child Poverty Action Group, London, 1993.

Goldman, M. I., *USSR in Crisis: The Failure of the Economic System,* W.W. Norton, New York, 1983.

Goldthorpe, John, H. and Gordon Marshell, "The Promising Future of Class Analysis: A Response to Recent Critiques", *Sociology*, 26 (3), 1992.

Gore, Charles *et. al.*, "Markets, Citizenship and Social Exclusion." In Gerry Rodgers *et al.* (eds.) *Social Exclusion: Rhetoric Reality Responses*, International Institute for Labour Studies and UNDP, Geneva, 1995.

Gough, I., "Social Assistance in Southern Europe", *South European Society and Politics*, 1 (1), Summer, 1996.

Gregory P. R. and R. C. Stuart, *Soviet Economic Structure and Performance*, HarperCollins, New York/London, 4th edition, 1990.

Guha, Sunil, "Can Structural Adjustment Overcome Unemployment?", *World of Work*, 10, December, 1994.

Gupta, S. and R. Hagemann "Social Protection During Russia's Economic Transformation", *Finance and Development*, 31 (4), December, 1994.

Hall, Leigh, *Post-Communist Developments in the Media in Bulgaria*, web site: <http://www.utexas.edu/ftp/pub/eems/bulgaria.html> (accessed September 1996).

Hamilton, Malcolm and Maria Hirszowicz, *Class and Inequality in Pre-Industrial, Capitalist and Communist Societies*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1987.

Hannerz, Alf, *Soulside - Inquiries into Ghetto Culture and Community*, Columbia University Press, New York and London, 1969.

Hannum, H. (ed.), *Documents on Autonomy and Minority Rights*, Martinus Nishoff, London, 1993.

Harman, Chris, "History, Myth and Marxism." In John Rees (ed.), *Essays on Historical Materialism*, Bookmarks, London, 1998.

Harman, Chris, "The Storm Breaks", *International Socialism,* 46, Spring, 1990.

Harrington, Michael, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States*, Penguin Books, Middlesex and Baltimore, 1963.

Hart, Keith, "Swindler or Public Benefactor? The Entrepreneur in His Community." In Jack Goody (ed.), *Changing Social Structure in Ghana*, International African Institute, London, 1975.

Haynes, Michael and Rumy Husan, "The State and Market in the Transition Economies: Critical Remarks in the Light of Past History and Current Experience", *Journal of European Economic History*, 27 (3), Winter, 1999.

Haynes, Michael, 'Istorikut i ideyata za natsiyata', *Istoricheski pregled*, 5-6, 1998.

Haynes, Michael, "Eastern European Transition - Some Practical and Theoretical Problems", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31 (8), 24 February 1996.

Hibbing, J. R. and Patterson S.C. "Public Trust in the New Parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe", *Political Studies,* 42, 1994.

Hildbrand, D., "The Restructuring Process in Central and Eastern Europe: Business Strategies for EC Companies", *West European Politics,* 15 (2), April 1992.

Hill, M. *Understanding Social Policy*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 5th edition, 1997.

Hills, John, "Researching Social Exclusion", presented to the conference *Social Exclusion and the City*,Kings College London and the Royal Geographical Society, 29th October 1998.

Hobsbawm, Eric, "Peasants and Politics", *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 1 (1), 1973.

Hockenos, Paul, "Free to Hate", *New Statesman and Society*, 12 April, 1991.

Hockenos, Paul, *Free to Hate: The Rise of the Far Right in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, Routledge, London, 1993.

Hockenos, Paul, "Unhappily Ever After", *New Statesman and Society*, 5 February, 1993.

Holland, D. and Owens, J., "Tax, Transition and Investment", *The OECD Observer*, 193, April/May, 1995.

Holman, R., *Poverty - Explanations of Social Deprivation,* Martin Robertson, London, 1978.

Humphey, Caroline, "Introduction", *Cambridge Anthropology*, 18 (2), 1995.

Hussan, Fareed, M. A. and Zelijko Bogetic, "Effects of Personal Income Tax on Income Distribution: Example from Bulgaria", *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 14 (4), 1996.

Hussan, Fareed M. A. and R. Kyle Peters Jr., "The Structure of Incomes and Social Protection during the Transition: The Case of Bulgaria", *Europe-Asia Studies,* 48 (4), 1996.

Imam, Ayesha, "SAP Is Really Sapping Us", *New Internationalist*, 257, July 1994.

International Labour Organisation (ILO), *World of Work*, 2, February 1993.

Jeffries, Ian, *Socialist Economies and the Transition to the Market: A Guide,* Routledge, London, 1993.

Jencks, Chistopher, and Paul E. Peterson (eds.), *The Urban Underclass*, Washington Brookings Institute, Washington D.C., 1991.

Jenkins, Richard, "Rethinking Ethnicity: Identity, Categorization and Power", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 17 (2), April, 1994.

Jones, Derek C. and Takao Kato, "The Nature and the Determinants of Labor Market Transitions in Former Communist Economies: Evidence from Bulgaria", *Industrial Relations*, 36 (2), 1997.

Jones, J., "New Breed of Non-Parents Turns Back on Family Way", *The Observer,* 16 April, 1995.

Josephine Onoh Memorial Lecture, *The European Commission on Human Rights from the Inside: Some Thoughts on Human Rights in Western Europe,* Hull University Press, Hull, 1990.

Jymowski, A.W., "Youth Activism in the East European Transformation", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies,* 27 (2), 1994.

Kagarlitsky, B., *Farewell Perestroika - A Soviet Chronicle,* Verso, London, 1990.

Kaloyanov, Todor, "Zhelan broi detsa spored etnicheskata prinadlezhnost na naselenieto" (Desired Number of Children According to Ethnic Groups), *Statistika*, 1, 1995.

Kanev, Krassimir, "Dynamics of Inter-Ethnic Tensions in Bulgaria and the Balkans", *Balkan Forum*, 4 (2), June 1996.

Krassimir, Kanev, *Bulgaria: Ethnic Harmony and Human Rights*, unpublished (date unknown).

Karamfilov, Zahari, "The Demographic Situation in Bulgaria: State, Trends, Prospects", *Bulgarian Military Review*, 3 (4), Winter, 1995.

Karklins, Kasma, *Ethnic Relations in the USSR*, Unwin Hyman, London, 3rd edition, 1990.

Kende, Pierre and Zdenek Strmiska, *Equality and Inequality in Eastern Europe*, Berg, Leamington Spa, 1987.

Kennett, Patricia, "Exclusion, Post-Fordism, and the 'New Europe'." In Phillip Brown and Rosemary Crompton (eds.), *A new Europe? - Economic Restructuring and Social Exclusion*, UCL Press, London, 1994.

Kleinman J. C., "The Slowdown in the Infant Mortality Rate", *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology*, 4, 1990.

Kleinman, Mark, "New Deals, Old Barriers", *The Guardian*, 30 September, 1998.

Kohn, Marek, *The Race Gallery*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1995.

Kolarova, Rumyana, "Bulgaria: Could We Regain What We Have Already Lost?" *Social Research*, 63 (2), Summer, 1996.

Korosenyi, A., "Intellectuals and Democracy in Eastern Europe", *Political Quarterly*,65 (4), 1994.

Krumm, B. Milanovic and M. Walton, "Transfers and the Transformation from Central Planning", *Finance and Development*, 32 (3), September, 1995.

Kryshtanovskaya, Olga, "Rich and Poor in Post-Communist Russia", *The Journal of Communist Studies*, 10 (1), March, 1994.

Lane, David, *The End of Social Inequality? - Class, Status and Power under State Socialism*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1982.

Lanjouw, Peter, "Infrastructure: A Ladder For The Poor", *Finance and Development*, 32 (1), March, 1995.

Lee, P. and C. Raban, *Welfare Theory and Social Policy*, Sage Publication, London, 1988.

Leigh-Doyle, Sue, Ray Mulvihill *et al. Social Exclusion: A Major Challenge for Public Welfare Services - European Conference Report*, Santiago de Compostela, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 1995.

Levitas, Ruth, *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour*, Macmillan, London, 1998.

Lewin, Moshe, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon: An Historical Interpretation*, Radius, London, 1989.

Liebich, Andre, "Minorities in Eastern Europe: Obstacles to a Reliable Count", *RFE/RL Research Report,* 1 (20), 15 May, 1992.

Liebow, Elliot, *Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Street Corner Men*, Little Brown, Boston Mass, 1967.

Linton, Martin, "What Credo do Europeans Recite? Did the Worship of Lenin Destroy God in the East as Consumerism did in the West?". *The Guardian*, 4 October. 1991.

Lister, Ruth (ed.), *Charles Murray and the Underclass: The Developing Debate*, IEA Health and Welfare Unit, London, 1996.

Llonski, G. and Karten, S., "Hungary - Special Issue Political Data Yearbook", *European Journal of Political Research,* 28 (3/4), December 1995.

Lucassen, Leo, "A Blind Spot: Migratory and Travelling Groups in Western European Historiography", *International Review of Social History*, 38, 1993.

MacGregor, Susanne, *The Politics of Poverty*, Longman, London, 1981.

Maclead, Jay, *Ain't No Makin' It - Aspirations and Attainment in a Low Income Neighbourhood,* Westview Press, Boulder, Oxford, 1987 (reprint 1995).

MacPherson, Stewart, "Social Exclusion - Review Article", *Journal of Social Policy*, 26 (4), 1997.

Mandel, E., *Beyond Perestroika*, Verso, London, 1991.

Manning, N., "Social Policy and the Welfare State", in D. Lane (ed.), *Russia in Transition,* Longman, London, 1995.

Marquand, C., "Human Rights Protection and Minorities." In D.C. Oliver (ed.), *Public Law,* 1994.

Marshall, T.H., *Social Policy in the Twentieth Century*, Hutchinson, London, 4th edition, 1977.

Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Lawrence and Wishart, Moscow/London, 1950.

Marx, Karl *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy,* Vol. 1, Penguin Classics, Middlesex, 1990 (original 1887).

Masi de, P. and V. Koen, "Anatomy of the Russian Inflation", *Transition*, 6 (5-6), May/June 1995.

Matthews, Mervyn, *Privilege in the Soviet Union*, George Allen and Unwin, London., 1978.

Matthews, Mervyn, *Poverty in the Soviet Union*, University of Cambridge Press, Cambridge, 1986.

Mayer and Jenkins, "Poverty and the Distribution of Material Hardship", *Journal of Human Resources,* 24 (1), 1989.

McAuley, Alastair, "Economic Justice in Eastern Europe." In Stein Ringen and Claire Wallace (eds.), *Societies in Transition - East Central Europe Today*, 1. Avebury, Aldershot, 1994.

McAllister, Ian, Richard Rose and Stephen White, *How Russia Votes*, Chatham House Publishers, Chathem NJ, 1997.

McIntosh M. C., M. A. MacIver *et al.*, "Public Meets Market Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe 1991-1993", *Slavic Review,* 53, 1994.

McKean, Warwick, *Equality and Discrimination Under International Law*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1983.

McManon, Gary, "Structural Adjustment with a Human Face - A Comment on Adelman and Taylor", *The Journal Of Development Studies*, 28 (1), October, 1991.

Mihill, C., "Public Enemy Number One", *The Guardian,* 2 May, 1995.

Milanovic, Branco, "A Cost of Transition: 50 million New Poor and Growing Inequality", *Transition,* 5 (8), October, 1994.

Milanovic, Branco, "Income, Inequality and Poverty During The Transition", *World Bank Research Paper Series*, 11, Washington D.C. World Bank, 1996.

Miller A.H., V. L. Hesli and W. M. Reisinger "Reassessing Mass Support for Political and Economic Change in the Former USSR", *American Political Science Review*, 88 (2), June 1994.

Minassian, Garabed and Stoyan Totev, "The Bulgarian Economy in Transition -Regional Aftereffects", *Eastern European Economics,* 34 (3), May/June, 1996.

Minority Rights Group (MRG), *Education in Multi-ethnic Societies of Central and Eastern Europe*, MRG Workshop Report, London, 1998.

Mishkova, Diana, "Literacy and Nation-Building in Bulgaria 1878 -1912", *East European Quarterly*, 28 (1), Spring, 1994.

Mitchell, Timothy, "Everyday Metophors of Power", *Theory and Society*, 19, 1990.

Morris, Lydia, *Dangerous Classes: The Underclass and Social Citizenship*, Routledge, London/ New York, 1994.

Moskoff, William, *Hard Times: Impoverishment and Protest in Perestroika Years of the Soviet Union 1985-1991*, Sharpe, London and New York, 1993.

Moulaert, F. "Measuring Socioeconomic Disintegration at the Local Level in Europe: An Analytical Framework." In Graham Room (ed.), *Beyond The Threshold*, The Policy Press, Bristol, 1995.

Mullerson, Rein, "Minorities in Eastern Europe and the Former USSR: Problems, Tendencies and Protection", *The Modern Law Review*, 56, 1993.

Murphy, Raymond, *Social Closure - The Theory of Monopolisation and Exclusion*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988.

Nagel, Joane, "Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Identity and Culture", *Social Problems*, 41 (1), February, 1994.

Naoumova, Stefka, "Ethnicity and Family: The Context of Family Law in Bulgaria." In J. Kurczewski and M. Maclean (eds.), *Family Law and Family Policy in the New Europe*, The Onati International Institute for the Sociology of Law, Dartmouth, 1997.

Navarro, V. "Welfare States and their Distributive Effects: Is Reagan a Closet Keynesian?", *Political Quarterly*, 59 (2), April/June, 1988.

Neuberger, Mary, "Bulgaro-Turkish Encounters and the Re-Imaging of the Bulgarian Nation (1878-1995)", *East European Quarterly*, 31 (1), March 1997.

Oakly A., P. Scott and A. S. Williams, "Hard Labour", *New Statesman and Society,* 26 August, 1995.

Ognjanov, Ljubomir, "The Socialist Development of Bulgaria 1956-1986", *Bulgarian Historical Review,* 4, 1986.

O'Nanlon, Rosalind, "Recovering the Subject in Subaltern Studies and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia", *Modern Asia Studies*, 22 (1), 1988.

Oppenheim, Carey, *Poverty: The Facts*, Child Poverty Action Group, London, 1993.

Orenstein, M., "The Failures of Neo-Liberal Social Policy in Central Europe", *Transition*, 28 June, 1996.

Pacek, A. C., "Macroeconomic Conditions and Electoral Politics in East Central Europe", *American Journal of Political Science*, 38 (3), August, 1994.

Panev, Baicho, "Vzriv na prestupnosta v Bulgaria" (The Crime Explosion in Bulgaria), *Statistika*, 4, 1995.

Perlman, J. E., *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro*, University of California Press, California, 1976.

Pesic, Milica, "Sofia Study Addresses Racial Splits", *Times Higher*, 16 November, 1998.

Peterson, P. E., "The Urban Underclass and the Poverty Paradox." In Jencks, Chistopher and Paul E. Peterson (eds.), *The Urban Underclass*, Washington Brookings Institute, Washington D.C., 1991.

Petmesidou, M. and L. Tsoulivis, "Aspects of the Changing Political Economy of Europe: Welfare State, Class Segmentation and Planning in the Post-Modern Age", *Sociology*, 28 (2), May 1994.

Phillips, B., "The Long Road to the European Court of Human Rights", *New Law Journal*, 12 August, 1994.

Popova, Tatyana, "Privatisation and Investments in Russia: History of Shortcomings", *Moya Gazeta*, 38, 1995.

Portes, Richard, "Transformation Traps", *The Economic Journal*, 104, September 1994.

Poulton, Hugh, *The Balkans - Minorities and States in Conflict*, Minority Rights Publications, London, 1991.

Project on Ethnic Relations (ed.), *The Ethnic Situation in Bulgaria*, Club '90 Publishers, Sofia, 1993.

Rady, M., "Minority Rights and Self-Determination in Contemporary Eastern Europe", *Slavic and East European Review*, 71 (4), October 1993.

Ramprakash, D., "Poverty in the Countries of the European Union: A Synthesis of Eurostat's Statistical Research on Poverty", *Journal of European Social Policy*, 4 (2), 1994.

Readings, Bill, *The University in Ruins*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts and London, 1996.

Rees, John, (ed.), *Essays on Historical Materialism*, Bookmarks, London, 1998.

Rich, Bruce, "Greenspeak", *New Internationalist*, 214, December 1990.

Richthofen, Wolfgang von, "Eastern Europe: Rebuilding Workers' Protection", *World of Work*, 4, June 1993.

Rifkin, Susan, B., "Lessons From Community Participation in Health Programmes", *Health Policy and Planning*, 1 (3), 1986.

Rodgers, Gerry, "Poverty: Old Problems, New Strategies", *World of Work*, 7, March 1994.

Rodgers, G *et al.*, *Overcoming Exclusion: Livelihood and Rights in Economic and Social Development*, International Labour Organisation, UNDP, Geneva, 1994.

Rodgers, Gerry, C. Gore and J. B. Figeiredo (eds.), *Social Exclusion: Rhetoric Reality Responses*, International Institute for Labour Studies and UNDP, Geneva, 1995.

Rose, Richard, "Toward a Civil Economy", *Journal of Democracy*, 3 (2), April 1992.

Rose, Richard, "Mobilizing Demobilized Voters in Post-Communist Societies", *Party Politics*, 4 (1), 1995.

Rose, Richard, and W. T. Mishler, "Mass Reaction to Regime Change in Eastern Europe: Polarisation of Leaders and Laggards", *British Journal of Political Science*, 24 (2), 1994.

Rostow, W. W., *The Dynamics of Soviet Society*, Mentor, New York, 1963.

Roudometof, Victor, "The Consolidation of National Minorities in Southeastern Europe" *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 24, Winter, 1996.

Rutter, Michael and Nicola Madge, *Cycles of Disadvantage: A Review of Research*, Heinemann, London, 1976.

Sachs, Jeffrey, "Building a Market Economy in Poland", *Scientific American*, 266 (3), March 1992.

Sachs, Jeffrey, "Beyond Bretton Words - A New Blueprint", *The Economist*, 1 October, 1994.

Sachs, Wolfgang, "The Discovery of Poverty", *New Internationalist*, 232, June, 1992.

Sakwa, R., *Gorbachev and His Reforms*, Phillip Allen, Hertfordshire, 1990.

Sazinov, Vadim, "The West: Friend or Foe? Nationwide Surveys", *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 46 (49), 1994.

Schneider A. and H. Ingram, "Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy", *American Political Science Review,* 87 (2), June 1993.

Schöpflin, George, *Politics in Eastern Europe 1945-1992,* Blackwell, Oxford, 1993.

Schweitzer, Julian, "Transition in Eastern Europe - The Social Dimension", *Finance and Development,* 27 (4), December, 1990.

Scott, James. C., *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1976.

Scott, James. C., *Weapons of the Weak*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1985.

Scott, James. C., *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts,* Yale University Press, New Haven, 1990.

Sen, Amartya K., "The Economics of Life and Death", *Scientific American*, 268 (5), May, 1993.

Sen, Amartya K., *Inequality Reexamined*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992.

Seldon, A. *Wither the Welfare State,* Occasional Paper 60, The Institute of Economic Affairs, 1981.

Sethi, Harsh, "Groups in New: Politics and Transformation", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 19 (7), 1984.

Silver, Hilary, "Social Exclusion and Social Solidarity: Three Paradigms", *International Labour Review,* 133 (5-6), 1995.

Simpson, R. and R. Walker, *Europe For Richer or Poorer?,* Child Poverty Action Group, London, 1993.

Singer, Daniel, "Reaching for Riches", *New Internationalist*, 214, December, 1990.

Solimano, Andres, "The Post-Socialist Transitions in Comparative Perspective", *World Development,* 21 (11), 1993.

Soros, George, (interview with), "The International Financial Crisis - Interview", *Challenge*, 42 (2), March-April, 1999.

Spicker, Paul, *Principles of Social Welfare - An Introduction to Thinking About The Welfare State*, Routledge, London, 1988.

Spicker Paul, "Exclusion", *Journal of Common Market Studies,* 35 (1), March, 1997.

Stacks, J. F., "Judicial Policy-Making and the Evolving Protection of Human Rights: The ECHR in Comparative Perspective", *West European Politics*, 5, 1992.

Stalker, Peter, "Lives in the Balance", *New Internationalist*, 168, February 1987.

Stephen, Chris, "Double Trouble", *New Statesman and Society*, 9 October 1992.

Stalin, J, *Marxism and the National Question*, Progress, Moscow, 1971 [1913].

Stammers, N., "Human Rights and Power", *Political Studies*, 41, 1993.

Stiefal, M. and M. Wolfe, *A Voice for the Excluded - Popular Participation in Development: Utopia or Necessity?,* UNRISD, Zed Books Ltd, London and New Jersey , 1994.

Strobel, Pierre, "From Poverty to Exclusion: A Wage Earning Society or a Society of Human Rights?", *International Social Science Journal*, 48 (2), 1996.

Sunic T., "The Persistence of the Communist Mystique", *The Journal of Social Political and Economic Studies,* 19, Spring, 1994.

Sutcliffe, R. "Helping Change in Eastern Europe", *World of Work*, 2, February 1993.

Swift, Richard, "Squeezing the South - 50 years is Enough", *New Internationalist*, 257, July 1994.

Sziraczki, Gyorgy and James Windell, "Impact of Employment Restructuring on Disadvantaged Groups in Hungary and Bulgaria", *International Labour Review,* 131 (4-5), 1992.

Tchernina, Natalia, *Economic Transition and Social Exclusion in Russia*, Research Series 108, International Institute for Labour Studies and UNDP, Geneva, 1996.

Tilly, Charles, "Domination, Resistance, Compliance...Discourse", *Sociological Forum*, 6 (3), 1991.

Titmus R.M., *Essays on 'the Welfare State',* Unwin University Books, London, 2nd edition, 1996.

Touraine, A. "Inégalitiés de la Société Industrielle, Exclusion du Marché." In J. Affichard and J. P. de Foucauld (eds.), *Justice Sociale et Inégalités*, Éditions Ésprit, Paris, 1992.

Townsend, Peter, *The International Analysis of Poverty*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1993.

Townsend, Peter, and Davidson N. (eds.), *Inequalities in Health -The Black Report* and *The Health Divide* by Margaret Whitehead, Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1992.

Urban, M. E., *More Power to the Soviets,* Edward Elgar, Hants, 1990.

Vasileva, Darina, "Bulgarian Turkish Emigration and Return", *International Migration Review*, 26 (2), 1992.

Vasilva, D. "Conference Report", *International Migration Review,* 26 (4), 1992.

Vecernik, Jiri, "Incomes in Central Europe: Distributions, Patterns and Perceptions", *Journal of European Social Policy,* 6 (2), 1996.

Verdery, Katherine, "Theorising Socialism: A Prologue to the 'Transition'", *American Ethnologist*, 18 (3), 1991.

Verdery, Katherine, "From Parent-State to Family Patriarchs: Gender and Nation in Contemporary Eastern Europe", *East European Politics and Societies,* 8 (2), Spring, 1994.

Vries, M. G. de, "The IMF Fifty Years Later", *Finance and Development*, 32 (2), June 1995.

Wade L.L., A. J. Groth and P. Lavelle, "Estimating Participation and Party Voting in Poland: The 1991 Parliamentary Elections", *East European Politics and Society,* 8 (1), Winter, 1994.

Walker, Alan and Carol Walker, *Britain Divided: The Growth of Social Exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s,* Child Poverty Action Group Ltd, London, 1997.

Walker, Robert, "Poverty and Social Exclusion in Europe." In A. Walker and C. Walker (eds.) *Britain Divided - The Growth of Social Exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s*, Child Poverty Action Group Ltd, London, 1997.

Wallace, Laura, "Reshaping Technical Assistance", *Finance and Development*, 27 (4), December 1990.

Wapenhaus, William, "The Challenge of Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe", *Finance and Development,* 27 (4), December 1990.

Warner, N., "A Sad Song for Europe", *The Guardian*, 30 October, 1996.

Wesolowski, W. "The Notions of Strata and Class in Socialist Society." In Andre Beteille (ed.), *Inequality,* Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1969.

Wheatly, Stephen, "National Minorities and the Emerging Human Right to Political Inclusion and Dialogue", *East European Human Rights Review*, 2 (2), 1997.

Whitaker, Ben (ed.), *Minorities: A Question of Human Rights?,* Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1984.

White, Christene Pelzer, "Everyday Resistance, Socialist Revolution and Rural Development: The Vietnemese Case", *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 13 (2), 1986.

White, Stephen (ed.), *Gorbachev and After,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992.

White, S. *et al.* (eds.), *Developments in Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics,* Macmillan, London, 1992.

White, S., G. Gill and D. Slider, *The Politics of Transition,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993.

Wilde, Larry, *Modern European Socialism,* Dartmouth, Aldershot, 1994.

Williams, F., "Social Relations, Welfare and the Post-Fordism Debate." In Burrows and Loader (eds.), *Towards a Post-Fordist Welfare State*, Routledge, London, 1994.

Willis, Paul, *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, Saxon House, Farnborough, 1977.

Woelk, B.G., "Cultural and Structural Influences in the Creation of Participation in Community Health Programmes", *Social Science and Medicine*, 35 (4), 1992.

Wolfe, Marshell, "Globalisation and Social Exclusion: Some Paradoxes." In Rodgers *et al.* (eds.), *Social Exclusion: Rhetoric, Reality, Responses*, IILS and UNDP, Geneva, 1995.

Wyman, M, White, S *et al.,* "Public Opinion Parties and Voters in the December 1993 Russian Elections", *Europe-Asia Studies,* 47 (4), 1995.

Yanolev, G. I., "Perestroika and Trade Unions in the USSR", *Labour and Society,* 15 (3), 1990.

Yee, Danny, *A Book Review: Weapons of the Weak Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance,* 1994, web site <http://www.anatomy.usyd.edu.au/danny/book-reviews/h/weapons_of_the_weak.html> (accessed June 1997).

Yelloly, M. "The Dynamics of Difference: Poverty and Wealth", *Journal of Social Work Practice,* 7 (1), 1993.